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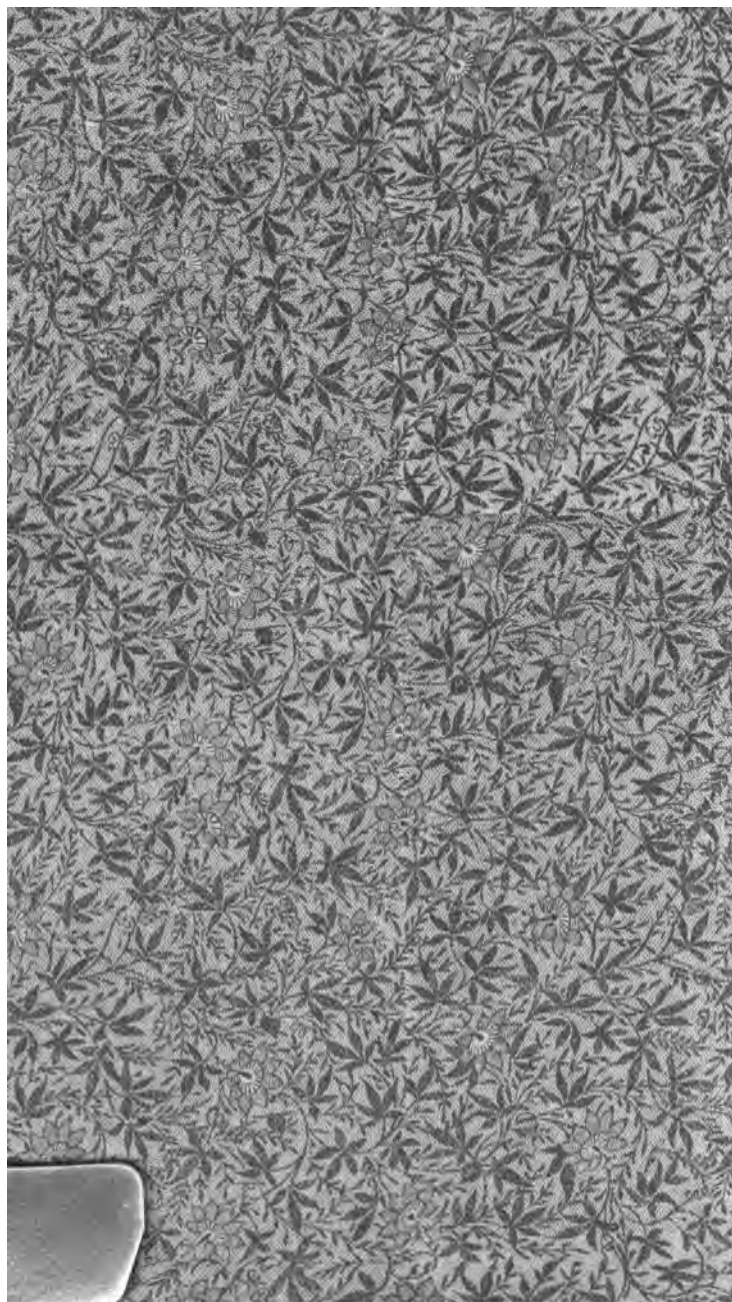
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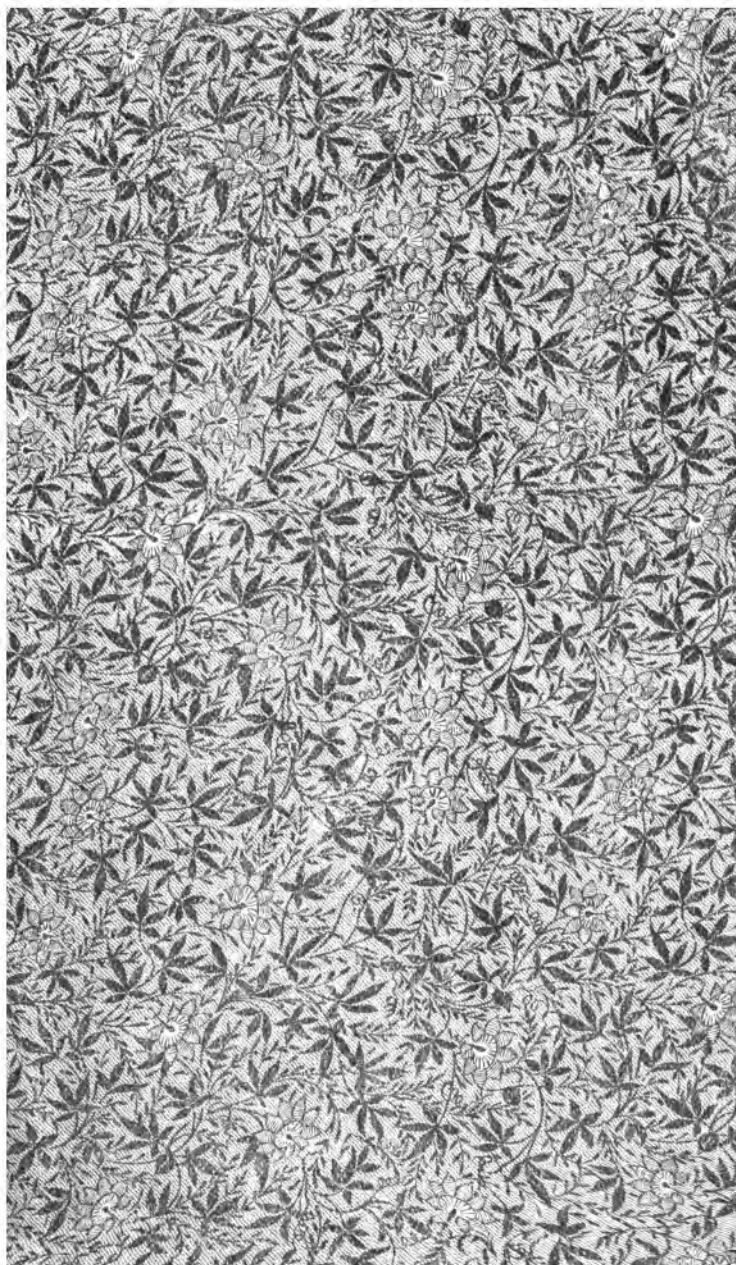
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A Novel.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY

MARTIN PÁGET.

VOL. II.



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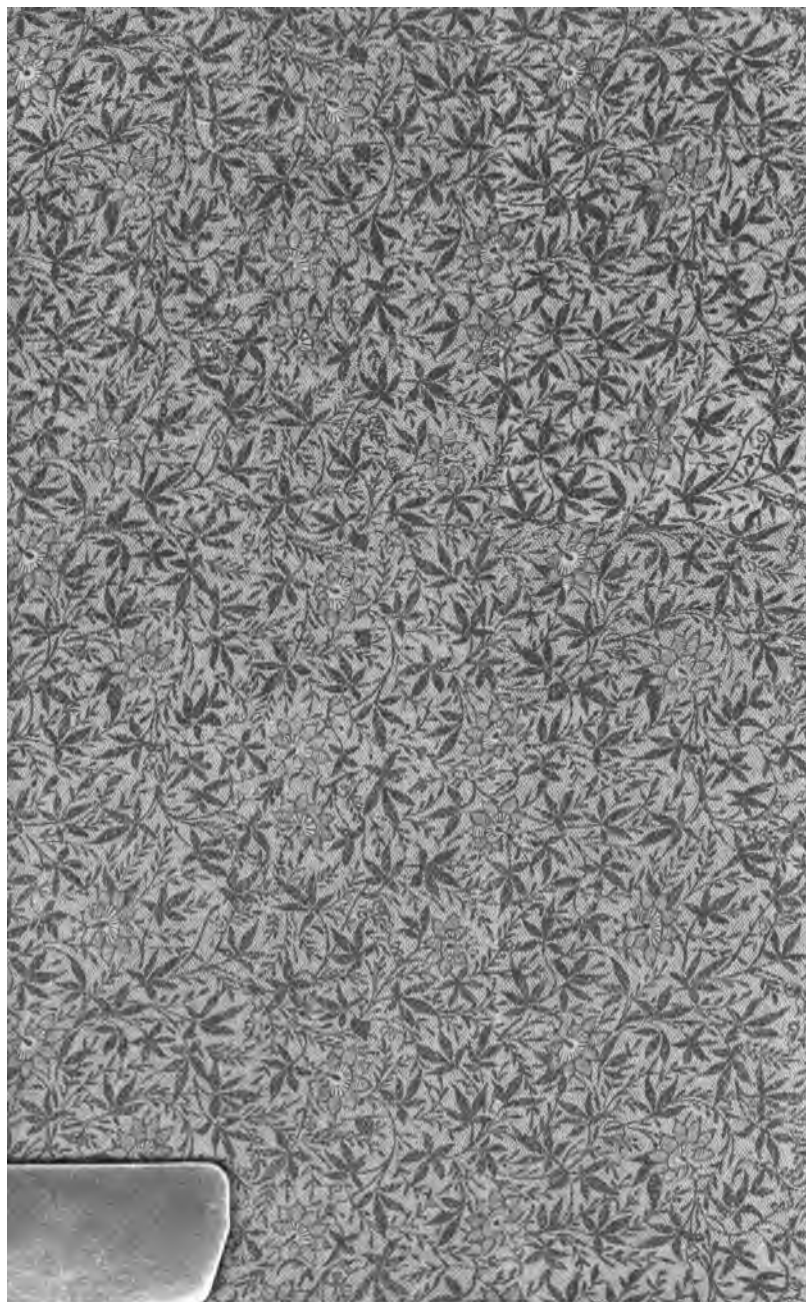
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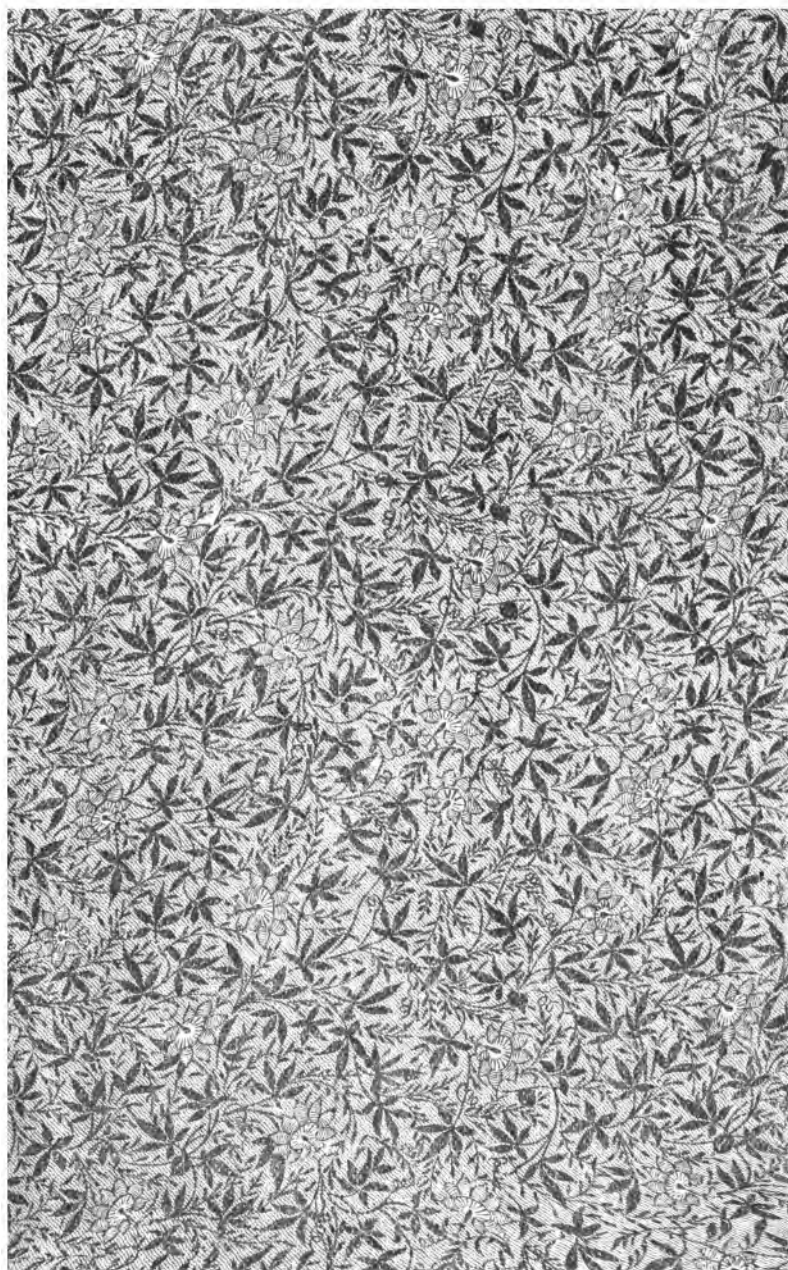
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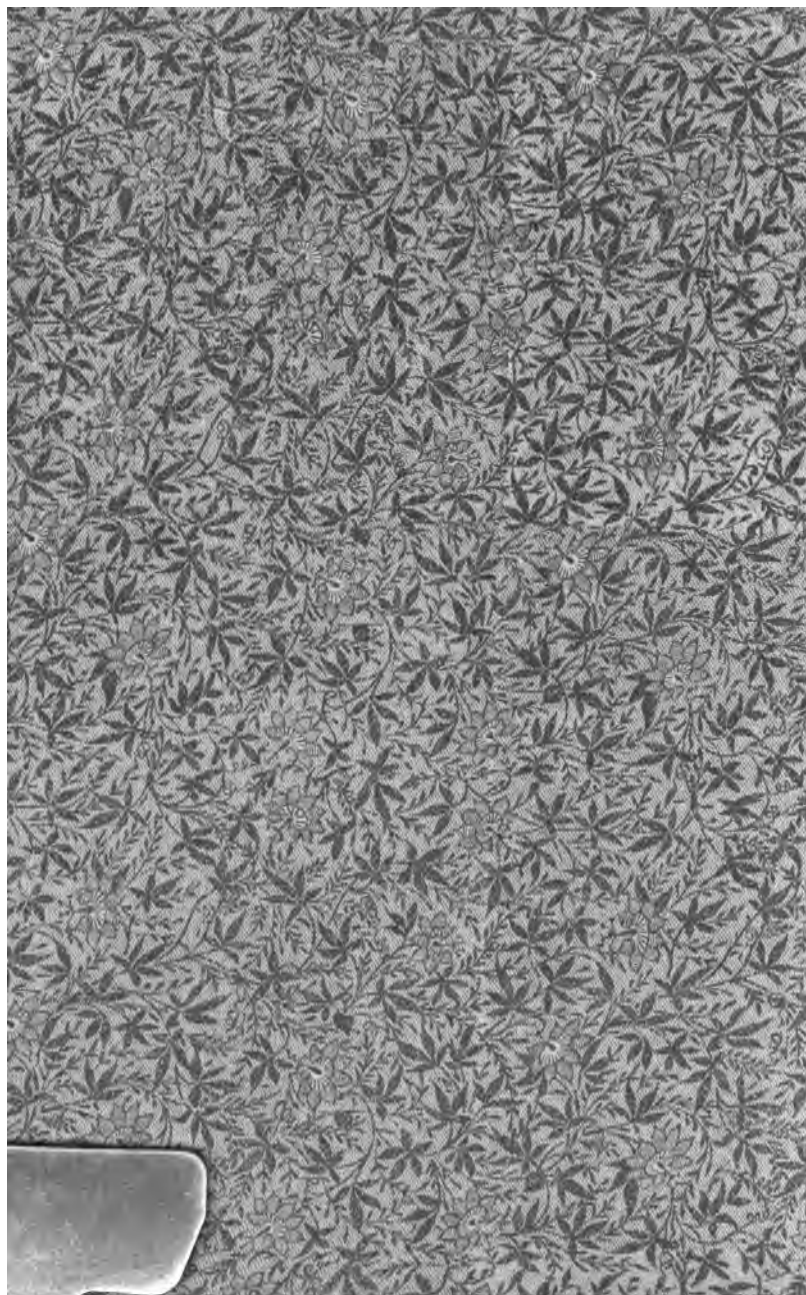
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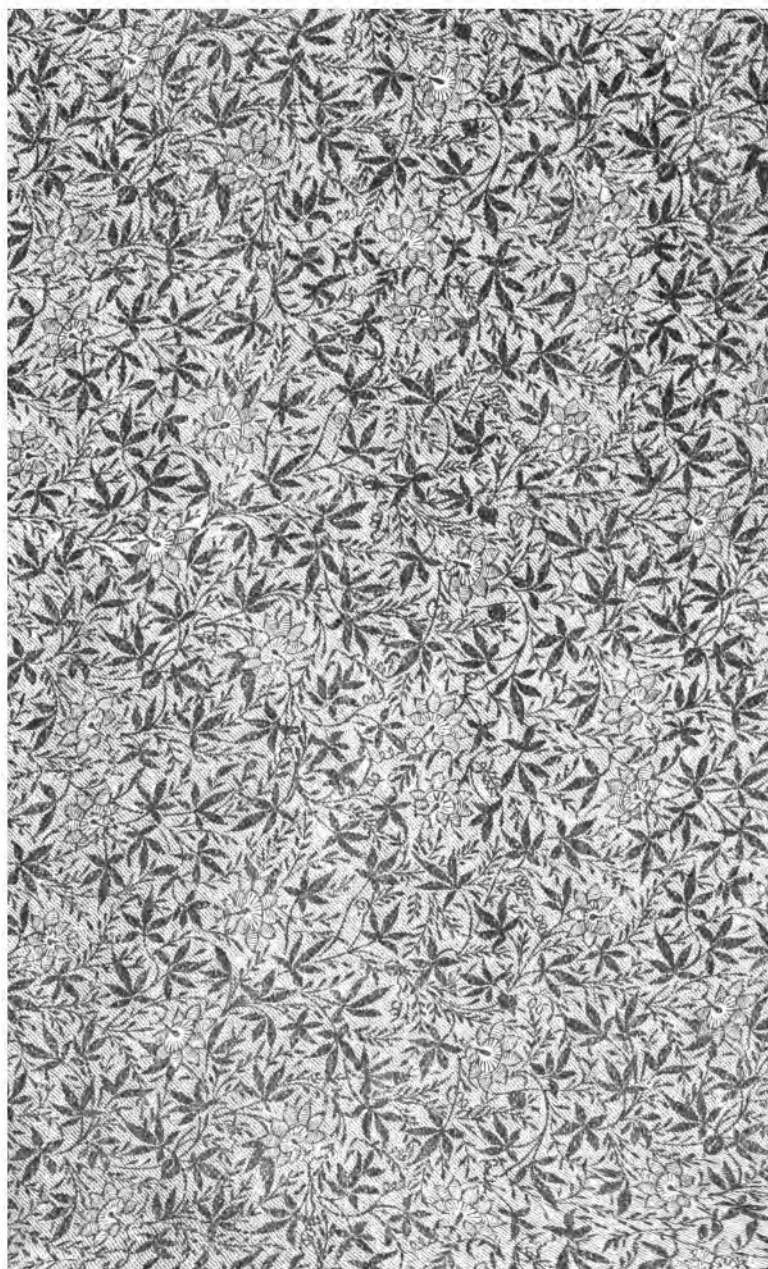
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BOOK THE SECOND

(Continued).

ORANGE BLOSSOMS.

SHE WORE A WREATH OF ROSES.

CHAPTER VI.

THUS was the fair and gentle Eily betrothed to Stephen Martin.

How differently people thought about the engagement.

Mrs. Grundy, as usual, was very talkative over it, the whole affair was such a surprise to her. She had been looking for something else to chatter about, and it was rather a shock to her to find that she had been on the wrong scent the whole time.

She was expecting an *esclandre!* the *histoire* was at an end, and there was nothing to talk about but a stupid engagement.

It was a disappointment to Mrs. Grundy to have to turn her attention to such a tame affair, when she had been scenting something spicy, but she made the best of it, and had a great deal to say about Mr. Martin

and his fair *fiancée*. She wondered what settlement there would be ; she wondered how did Mrs. O'Mahon like it, or did she know all along ? Had outsiders only been taken in by Mr. Martin's attentions to her ? She wondered did the girl really care for him ? Most probably not, but no one could blame her for accepting him, he was quite the most eligible *parti*.

True, he was elderly ; he was a widower ; he had a grown-up daughter, but what were all these when weighed in the scale, against his long purse, his property, his position ? and the gossips considered Eily a very lucky girl to have secured such a good match, and gave full credit to Mrs. O'Mahon for her astuteness in keeping a fast hold on the man until he proposed.

"She played her cards well," said Mrs. Grundy.

Was Mrs. O'Mahon triumphant about her success ?

Not at all. She was cowed, she was ashamed, and she was frightened.

She knew that her daughters despised her, and she felt some qualms of conscience when she thought of the sacrifice Eily was making, for she knew her daughter had a love-dream.

Still she kept a bold front to the world, it was only in the privacy of her own room that she gave vent to her feelings.

Mr. O'Mahon was, as usual, in his happy-go-lucky way. He was quite indifferent; he thought Eily very fortunate, and hoped she would be happy, but it surprised him that a young girl could willingly select a bridegroom nearly as old as her father. Still, he admitted Mr. Martin was considered a good-looking man, and there was no accounting for taste.

Once a suspicion crossed his mind that all was not as it ought to be, and he questioned Eily, but she replied to him calmly, she told him she was quite satisfied to marry Mr. Martin.

Mrs. O'Mahon was present, and she trembled for her daughter's answer, for she knew well if her husband once got the idea that Eily was coerced into accepting Mr. Martin, that he would use his authority and break off the engagement instantly.

If Eily had been alone she would probably have confessed all, but fate was against her, and the one opportunity of opening her heart to her father was lost.

Gerry did not quite understand how it was,

but things seemed to be all right, so it was no affair of his.

Maud pondered about it a great deal, she felt very sorry for her sister, but still thought if she had energy, and could take a certain command at first, things might turn out well enough.

"Mark my words," she would say, "make a bold start, you have the whip in your own hand, use it unsparingly, unflinchingly, if required!"

Eily would open wide her big blue eyes, and look at her sister in astonishment.

"He is of a jealous disposition," Maud would continue, "if needs be you can torture him. A pretty woman can always attract attention if she wishes. It will be agony to him to find you admired, so you can punish him if he annoys you, for you can flirt."

"Flirt! but that wouldn't be right."

"Is it right that you should marry him?"

"Don't talk of it, dear!"

"I won't Eily! but start as you mean to go on. Keep a firm grasp of the whip, remember!"

Eily couldn't comprehend Maud, and perhaps it was as well she couldn't, for she

gave such contrary advice every day that it was best it should not be remembered. Maud was in a fever of excitement; she watched her mother, she watched Mr. Martin, for she suspected both of them, and she kept a close guard on the deed. It was in her mother's keeping, but Maud had accidentally found a key that opened the drawer, and more visits were made to it than Mrs. O'Mahon ever dreamed of. Once every day in her presence her daughter looked into the drawer.

When the question of settlements came to be discussed, there was very near being an end to the whole affair.

Mr. Martin found things not quite so easy as he expected.

Mr. O'Mahon flared up, and said he would be damned if he would allow his daughter to marry without a settlement. He never heard of such a thing; and he asked Mrs. O'Mahon if she had lost the little common-sense she had once possessed to think of consenting to such an arrangement.

She had a *mauvais quart d'heure*, for Mr. O'Mahon was awful when he was aroused; even the stern Stephen quailed. However things were settled at last; Miss Ferrers was giving her grand-niece £5,000, and Mr.

Martin added a like sum, which was settled for Eily's sole use. Any further provision Mr. Martin would make by will. This hardly satisfied Mr. O'Mahon, he thought it an inadequate settlement, but at last he gave in, and preparations were put in progress for the wedding, for there was to be no delay.

Mrs. O'Mahon thought it was wise to hurry it on, and she made rapid arrangements.

Phœbe Martin alone was truly pleased; she was delighted; the very idea of the marriage enchanted her, it would be such pleasure, she thought, to have Eily always as her companion, and she planned how they should spend their time together. When Eily heard Phœbe talk in this strain it pleased her, at all events, there was at least one crumb of comfort; she would not be alone with Mr. Martin, for she would have Phœbe, and she was fond of the young girl. She liked her coolly, calmly, as one outside of her family circle, while Phœbe loved Eily with all her heart, with all the affection that had been stored up for years, waiting for a worthy object to expend it on.

No one longed and wished for the wedding day as did Phœbe; she counted the hours

until Eily should be mistress of New Garden. No thought of having to take second place crossed her mind.

Of Percy's feelings it is almost needless to speak; he thought it a shame and a pity that Eily should be sacrificed, but of course he said nothing. How could he speak? it was no affair of his! She had told him that the question of the mortgage was only secondary, there was another and more urgent reason for the marriage.

How he longed to know it!

There were wheels within wheels!

He got no reply to his note to Harold, and wondered thereat. In the meantime he was free to see Maud every day, but, as the preparations for the wedding increased, and the day named drew near, he saw very little of her, as she was taken up with her sister.

Once they all went for another sail in Dublin Bay, Harold only of the former party was absent, and his name was never once mentioned.

One evening, about a fortnight after the flower show, Percy met an acquaintance who told him of Harold's illness. He had heard nothing about it, and next day he went to see his cousin.

Harold was sitting up, but he looked wretchedly ill, he seemed a mere shadow of his former self, and Percy was shocked at his altered appearance.

"My time has not come yet," said Harold, "I wish it had, for I am tired of life. Tell me about her!"

What could Percy say? He had promised to be silent with regard to the truth, and yet he longed to tell it.

"You were wrong about me."

"Yes, your letter told me so, but how is it? How is she marrying that man? You don't think she cares for him, surely?" said Harold, who looked keenly at Percy, who was at a loss for a reply.

"Everybody thinks her a very fortunate girl."

"I suppose so! It puzzles me! I think of it from morning till night—she was so gentle and kind, so very unlike an ambitious, designing girl! Do you think was she playing with me, in order to bring him on?"

Percy hesitated; he did not know how to answer such a question. Harold's eyes were fixed on him—how big they appeared; his illness seemed to have altered his face, he looked all eyes.

"No," said Percy, at last, "I don't think her designing. There is some reason that is kept dark."

"Then her parents are forcing her," remarked Harold, with a frown.

"I fancy Mrs. O'Mahon urged her, but I acquit her father of interference."

"Percy, I want to ask you a question—tell me the truth—do you think she ever cared for me?"

Here was a dilemma for Percy! but come what might, he would not prevaricate.

"I believe she did," he answered.

"I have thought so myself," said Harold, with a sigh. "As she has chosen wealth and position, I must only try and think her unworthy of a regret. A girl who deliberately sells herself is no loss to any man. Percy, I have asked for leave, I want to recover my strength, then I mean to go abroad. I'll exchange; I couldn't remain in Ireland. When you see her, tell her—I'll try to forgive her, but she did me a cruel wrong."

"I'll give her your message," answered Percy, "she said something about giving me one for you."

"Did she?" asked Harold, as an eager light sparkled in his eyes.

"Yes, she said she would do so."

"I don't want to see her again, at least, I mean to speak to her, I couldn't bear it ; but I wonder, would she wave me an adieu when I am leaving."

"I am sure she would," answered Percy.
"Shall I ask her ?"

"Do ; and come tell me what she says. I leave on Monday if the doctor allows me."

Percy told Eily of Harold's request, and she said she would wave a farewell to his cousin, and begged him to manage the means of doing so for her.

They arranged their plan splendidly ; Mrs. O'Mahon was off early to town, accompanied by Maud and Gerry ; Mr. Martin went with his daughter to select the bridesmaids' lockets, and Eily was at home with her father.

To them, arrived Percy, who proposed a little sail in the Bay ; at first Mr. O'Mahon demurred, he said Mr. Martin would be out about four o'clock, and that he was to bring some law papers, so that he thought they had better remain at home, but Eily coaxed, she wanted to have one more sail, she said, and of course she got her way.

When Mr. Martin arrived, he found his

bride elect flown, but he was not distressed, he knew she was safe.

Off went the "Phryne." Soon Mr. O'Mahon was deep in a sea story, and he never heeded the other two, who talked a good deal at first, and then were silent. Eily gave Percy a letter for his cousin, but he was not to send it to Harold until after her marriage.

It cost her a bitter hour to write it, and after all she said but little; she told him of her love, but that duty compelled her to sacrifice herself, and she begged him to forgive her, and forget her.

Mr. O'Mahon looked up from his book at last, and was surprised to find they were so far away.

"Why!" he said, "we shan't get back to Kingstown until after seven."

"What matter?" said Eily.

Just as the mail steamer glided out of the harbour she passed a yacht—passed very closely. A gentleman, standing at the stern, waved his hat to those on board the yacht. What could they do but return his salute? Eily's white handkerchief fluttered in the breeze as she stood alone, while Percy and Mr. O'Mahon waved their hats.

“What lunatics some people are when they get on board a vessel,” said Mr. O’Mahon. “I don’t suppose that fellow ever saw one of us, and yet he waves his hat as if we were his dearest friends.”

“Well ! and haven’t you been a lunatic to return his salute ?”

“Faith, yes ! I forgot that.”

And so Eily waved her adieu to Harold, and, as she did so, murmured prayers for his welfare fell from her lips, and she prayed for herself also.

“O God !” she said, “let me die soon ; let my life be short.” Then, she remembered, and added, “Thy will be done.”

CHAPTER VII.

I saw her but a moment,
Yet methinks I see her now,
With the wreath of orange blossoms
Upon her snowy brow.

EILY'S wedding morn dawned dark and cloudy, and, as the day wore on, fitful showers began to fall.

A number of guests were invited to witness the ceremony; Mrs. O'Mahon was anxious to have strangers around her, she did not want a quiet wedding. Eily expressed a wish that her marriage should be very private, but her mother instantly objected to such an arrangement, she insisted on having a large wedding party, and, as no one disputed the question further, she got her way.

Two days before the important event was to come off, Mr. Martin arrived to Percy, in a great state of trepidation. His friend, who had promised to be his best man, could not come; he was ill, and would not be able to leave his room for a fortnight, and he came to beg Percy to take the vacant post, and thereby oblige him very much. Percy

consented instantly; he was glad to do so, for he had been thinking that the best man would have the right of escorting the chief bridesmaid, and of course he should have to submit to seeing Maud appropriated by somebody else.

Now all would be right!

Half-past eleven o'clock found the guests assembled in Monkstown Church; the bridegroom, looking more pompous than ever, arrived, accompanied by his best man, and shortly after came Mrs. O'Mahon and Gerry. She looked better than she had been doing for some time past, but she was nervous, very nervous; however no one noticed her, for soon followed the bride, leaning on her father's arm. She was pale, she was composed, she was like marble. Not a sign of emotion of any kind. No smiles, no tears.

How lovely she looked in her rich white satin dress. Her dark locks surmounted by a wreath of natural orange blossoms.

I saw her but a moment,
Yet methinks I see her now,
With the wreath of orange blossoms
Upon her snowy brow.

After the bride, followed her maidens arrayed in blue and white. Maud, who

looked very nearly as pale as her sister, as she came up the aisle, walked beside Phœbe Martin, who was all smiles and animation. It was good to see one smiling face.

Ella Fowler and three other damsels made up the bevy of bridesmaids.

The bridegroom stepped forward to his place beside the bride. Then approached the parson, and the two were made one.

They were united until death should part them !

The ceremony over, the newly married couple retired to the vestry for the registration of the marriage; they were followed by many of the guests, who offered their congratulations. Eily thanked her friends with perfect composure.

“Mr. Langrishe ! I want you to help me,” whispered Maud to Percy. “I want to get away instantly, immediately after my sister. Manage it for me, and I’ll be for ever indebted to you. On no account let mother get off before me. Will you help me, please ?” and she pressed her hand on his arm.

He looked surprised, her request was so unusual, still she seemed very anxious to get home quickly.

"I have a brougham here," he replied, "will you come with me?"

"Yes! yes! I'd go in a wheelbarrow, anything to get home before mother."

Percy left the vestry for a few minutes; when he returned he told Mr. Martin the carriage was waiting, so the bridegroom offered his arm to the bride, and they passed down the aisle, closely followed by the best man and chief bridesmaid.

Mr. and Mrs. Martin started, and the next carriage drew up; it was Mr. Langrishe's brougham, and into it stepped Maud and Percy.

"Tell him to drive fast," she said.

As Percy closed the door after him he nodded to Gerry, and said—

"See, I am running away with your sister!"

When Mrs. O'Mahon heard about it, a minute or two afterwards, she was very angry.

"Such conduct was beyond a joke," she said.

She did not know that Maud begged Percy to take her home immediately. If she only knew why Maud went!

When the brougham reached Windsor

Terrace, a minute after the bridal carriage, Percy handed out his affianced bride. He proposed during the drive, and was accepted. Maud hurried into the drawing-room.

"Eily, come here," she said, "I want you at once."

The bride went to her sister.

Mr. Martin looked surprised; he thought it unseemly that Eily should leave him without a word of apology.

Percy saw his displeasure, and said—

"I think Maud wants to tell her some news; we are to be brothers."

"I am very glad to hear it; of course I thought it probable," was the reply.

Eily and Maud hurried to their mother's room; they had evidently made their plan beforehand.

Maud opened the drawer, and handed Eily the deed; then they went to Maud's room, where a fire, lighted by her order, was blazing high. In a few minutes nothing remained of the deed but ashes.

Wild Park was free!

Not one word did the sisters speak while they were thus engaged; they stood together watching the parchment as it curled up with the heat; it became scorched, blackened, and

charred by degrees, and at last nothing remained but ashes. Eily's sacrifice had not been made in vain !

Maud turned to her sister.

"Darling," she said, as she embraced her. "You have saved us all from beggary, and I hope you'll be rewarded. I trust your life may not be utterly spoiled."

"Say no more, Maud ; you must be happy for both of us."

Maud blushed as she whispered her news to the bride, who looked delighted, and fondly kissed her sister, and then both returned to the drawing-room, where the guests were inquiring for Mrs. Martin.

Then followed the *déjeûner*, the usual speeches, the usual compliments.

A telegram of congratulation arrived from Miss Ferrers, who had written in the first days of the engagement that she would come to the wedding. What a dilemma for Mrs. O'Mahon ! She did not know how to put her relative off, and if she came what danger there should be for her ; some stray remark, some chance word about the diamonds, might reach the old lady's ears, and then would follow certain exposure for Mrs. O'Mahon. But fortunately Miss Ferrers' medical attend-

ant did not approve of her attempting the journey, so she stayed at home. What a relief for Mrs. O'Mahon when she heard her aunt's decision. For several nights she never closed her eyes, such was her dread of Miss Ferrers' projected visit.

The time came for the bride to don her travelling dress. The newly married couple were going to Killarney, later they were going abroad, and Phœbe was to accompany them. How much Mr. Martin wished he could leave his daughter at home, but it could not be done.

Maud and Phœbe accompanied the bride to her room. Mrs. O'Mahon touched Mr. Martin.

"Come now," she said, and they too went upstairs.

Mrs. O'Mahon went to Eily's room, and told Phœbe her father wanted her. The young girl passed out, and found Mr. Martin in the lobby. He gave her some trivial directions, and then told her to go downstairs.

When Phœbe was gone Mrs. O'Mahon went to her own room, opened the drawer, and found it empty! For an instant she couldn't believe her eyes, but the sense of

feeling aided sight. Her trembling fingers only found emptiness !

What could she say to Mr. Martin ? What should she do ?

She heard his impatient footstep on the lobby. She must face him, but she must first ask her daughters if they knew.

Knew !

Of course they knew ! of that she felt certain, it was almost needless to question them.

She left her room. Outside was Mr. Martin, but she passed him, making a gesture of her hand she opened the door where the sisters were together. Mr. Martin followed her.

"Girls !" she said, "who went to the drawer this morning ? Where is the deed ?"

Eily saw her husband standing outside, but she felt no fear.

"Mother !" she replied, "your guardianship of the deed ended when this ring was put on my finger."

"What have you done with it ?" cried Mrs. O'Mahon. "I gave him my promise that it should be safe."

"Safe !" exclaimed Maud, "did you con-

template such a fraud? Is it possible you intended to give it to him?"

"No. I promised him it should be safe—I promised to give it to Eily in his presence."

"And of course my wife will hand it to me when I ask her for it. Where is it, Eily?" said Mr. Martin.

"Oh! mother!" cried Eily reproachfully, "you planned this!"

"We had better not waste time talking. Where is the deed?" asked Mr. Martin in a stern voice.

Eily was silent.

"Open the door opposite, Stephen Martin," said Maud defiantly. "Look in the grate, and you'll find all that remains of it."

A look of devilish malignity crossed his features as he heard Maud's words. He did as she desired him; he opened her door, and entered the room. The fire had nearly burnt itself out, there could be seen the remains of some burnt papers.

His accomplice, Mrs. O'Mahon, went and looked also, and they both saw they were beaten.

Maud followed them.

"I planned that!" she said, pointing to

the ashes. "I suspected you two, and I feared you were not to be trusted. Now I know I was right. Mr. Martin, your wife is ready—remember she is not to blame."

Baffled rage and animosity were aflame in his breast, he couldn't speak. It was not so much the loss of the mortgage deed as the sense of defeat that aroused him. He intended to use it as a means of ensuring his wife's subjection to his will, and now it was gone!

Mrs. O'Mahon was angry also, she was angry at being detected. She intended to have offered the deed in such a natural way to her daughter, she meant to say—

"Why! dear, you had nearly forgotten about this paper, it is yours now! and you ought to give it to your husband to take care of for you."

But she was foiled, and worse, she was found out!

Maud alone was triumphant!

Eily felt this contemplated deceit on her mother's part extremely, she was pained beyond measure.

She willingly sacrificed herself to save her mother's name, and what return did she get?

"Thanks she did not want, but she had a right to expect that her parent would not deceive her.

"I am ready!" said the bride.

At her words, Mr. Martin recovered himself, he loved Eily, and he meant to make her happy if he could. He felt she was not to blame for what had happened.

Maud was the delinquent!

"Come then!" said the bridegroom.

They went down, and made their adieux to their friends.

Mrs. O'Mahon and Maud remained in the hall.

Was it accidental or otherwise, wondered one or two of the guests who were peeping out, the bride warmly embraced her sister, but did not even look at Mrs. O'Mahon; Mr. Martin kissed his mother-in-law, and did not notice his lovely young sister.

Not once did the sun shine out that day, it had been dull, dark, and oppressive.

"There's a storm in the air," said some one, "we had better go before it begins!"

Maud thought the storm was over if all were only known, and how pleased she felt that she had defeated them.

"Poor Eily!" she murmured, "what a gloomy wedding day! I hope it does not foreshadow her life!"

"I hope not!" answered Percy. "My queen! you and I must manage better, we must propitiate the clerk of the weather, we must have sunshine for our wedding!"

"I hope so!" she answered smilingly.

"I want to telegraph my news to my father. May I send him your love?" asked Percy.

"If you wish! if you think he will be pleased."

And so Percy telegraphed the news of his engagement to Fernleigh.

The baronet was delighted.

"That damned sneak will be kept out after all!" he shouted, when he read the telegram.

CHAPTER VIII.

Forti nihil difficile.

It was soon known that Mrs. O'Mahon's second daughter was engaged to Mr. Langrishe, and very many comments were made when the news became talked about. On the whole it was considered a wonderful stroke of luck, and Mrs. O'Mahon was envied by many matrons, who had been making strenuous efforts to relieve themselves of their daughters during the past seasons.

It was too bad really, they said, that these two girls should get off in their first year, and not only get off, but do so remarkably well. Mr. Martin was a brilliant match for Eily, but it was nothing compared to the recent engagement.

Mr. Langrishe was heir to a baronetcy, he was rich, and his father was very rich.

Mrs. O'Mahon soon recovered her usual self-confident manner, Eily was well married, Maud splendidly engaged, and after all, she thought, it was a very good thing, that the

girls had taken affairs into their own hands, and had destroyed the deed.

It was well to have Wild Park free, but still Gerry was not to be told, and Mr. O'Mahon went on his way rejoicing, content with fine weather, satisfied with the "good the gods provided," and quite ignorant that he had been freed from the incubus that had been weighing him down for so many years. There is no incubus like debt!

"Out of debt, out of danger," says the proverb, and no doubt Mr. O'Mahon often regretted the position he was in, yet his wife would not dare to tell him that Wild Park was no longer encumbered by mortgage, or other debt.

If she told him anything, she would have to tell the whole truth, and that she did not wish to do. She dreaded her husband knowing how weak she had been.

In the meanwhile the lovers were very happy, whether cruising about in Dublin Bay, or idly promenading on the Pier in the evening, when the full harvest moon shone down on them. Maud liked those delicious evenings best, they would go to the very end of the pier, and sit there and talk.

"Talk of what?"

Why, they would talk as all lovers do !
they would talk of their love and their future !
Oh ! those delightful evenings !

The moon shed her bright rays on the rippling waves, the broad stream of light stretched across the harbour, which was dotted over with yachts, while, the “low whisp’ring in boats” the faint moan of the sea, and the distant strains of the military band made music in the ears of the lovers, as they murmured their vows to each other.

Phoebe Martin was staying with the O’Mahons, and she and Gerry had rare fun together. It was great amusement to them to watch the lovers, and Maud got well quizzed and pestered by the two, who thought love-making was all a farce. Their time had not come yet, and in the meanwhile it was glorious fun to watch the victims of the little blind god, never dreaming he might find a spare arrow or two later on.

Cupid’s quiver is not empty yet !

The peevish urchin carries wings,
With which from heart to heart he springs,
His golden quiver swings behind,
With many fatal weapons lined.

One day Maud and Percy were together in the drawing-room in Windsor Terrace. That

very morning he received a letter from Sir Charles, urging a speedy marriage, he was most anxious there should be no delay, and Percy was quite willing to gratify his father. He had spoken to Mr. and Mrs. O'Mahon who had no objection, therefore the marriage was to be soon, it only remained with Maud to fix the time.

"Now Percy!" she said, "I want to know do you mean to do nothing all your life?"

"Do nothing!" he exclaimed, "I don't understand what you mean. What am I to do?"

"Do something! don't be idle! you must have an employment."

"But what? I never did a thing in my life!"

"I'm quite sure you didn't! but that is no reason why you shouldn't turn over a new leaf. It is never too late to mend."

"But queenie! you know there is no necessity for me to work! if that is what you mean."

"That is what I mean! Every man should work, and I am quite determined my husband must do something! I won't marry an idle man."

"That is good, by Jove!" said Percy,

“you’ve promised to marry me, and I’ll not release you. I’m incorrigibly idle. I never did anything, and I don’t believe I could! Now suggest! What could I do?”

“Go into Parliament!”

“By Jove! I never thought of that! The governor and I had a tremendous row last election, he wanted me to stand for Littleleigh, but I flatly refused.”

“Why wouldn’t you stand?” asked Maud.

“Too great a bother! I’d have to go and canvass, speechify, and all that sort of thing.”

“Was Sir Charles very angry with you?”

“We didn’t speak for nearly six months, but seriously, Maud, would you wish me to go into Parliament?”

“You must make up your mind to have some employment. I made a promise to my dear, good Fraulein, that I should never marry an idle man.”

“Why not, if he had money enough without working for it?” demanded Percy.

“Because, she said, idle men get into mischief sooner or later!”

That is quite true!

Oh, ye parents who are about to confide a young daughter to a husband’s care think

of that ! Idle men get into mischief sooner or later !

Pause ! reflect ere you give your child to an idle man. If he has wealth at his command, that is no reason why he should spend his days in idleness. "Men must work." God did not make man to spend his years in trying how best to fribble away his time !

Let him have some employment, no matter how trifling it may be. Let him have an object in life, and then you will be safe in trusting your child to him. There will be no danger that he will tire of his wife ; she will be his solace, his relaxation after his hours of work.

It is the idle man who does nothing who wearies of his wife, and seeks amusement elsewhere. And there are always evil-minded women, yes, and *even girls*, who are ready to amuse the man who neglects his wife !

It is vain ! it is useless for her to try to hold him back !

Satiety causes indifference and wish for change, and after a time the idle man neglects his wife. Parents who give their daughter to such a husband must bear to see her slighted, left lonely, while the husband amuses himself elsewhere.

The German teacher was quite right when she asked her favourite pupil to promise not to marry an idler.

"I could get into Parliament," said Percy, "but I shouldn't know what to do there."

"You could soon learn!" said Maud.

"I don't know about that," he replied, "I don't mind rattling off a speech at a wedding breakfast, or that sort of thing, but Parliament is altogether different. I shouldn't dare to speak a word there!"

"And at first you needn't speak."

"Why not?" he asked, with a smile.

Maud seemed so earnest about the matter that Percy was amused.

"All you need do at first is to watch the great man. Listen to him, follow him!" said Maud. "I mean Lord Beaconsfield, of course. You must follow his lead blindly, you must never think why or wherefore! You must vote always with him."

"I can't fathom him!" remarked Percy.

"Fathom him? You! you fathom him!" exclaimed Maud, in surprise, "why! you could never do it—when Bismark couldn't, it is not likely that you could understand him. Did you ever hear what Bismark said of Lord Beaconsfield?"

"No! what did he say?"

"He was speaking of the statesmen of Europe and said, 'I understand them all but one! I could hold them all in my hand, but for that wily, old Jew! I cannot fathom him!' So you see, Percy," continued Maud, "Bismark couldn't fathom him, and it is not likely you could. There is no necessity that you should—support his policy through thick and thin—never reason why—only do it—oppose Gladstone tooth and nail!"

"By Jove! what a bitter, little enemy Gladstone has got! You look furious this moment," said her lover.

"And I feel furious!" she cried, "for Gladstone is the enemy of my country. I believe in his heart he hates Ireland, he must find her *difficile* to deal with. Oppose him! Every time he is in office he does my unfortunate country some injury, pretending it to be a benefit, and some fools believe in him! Ireland thrives best, and is more peaceful under Conservative government!"

"Evidently you don't approve of Home Rule," remarked Percy.

"Home Rule!" cried Maud, in a mocking, scornful voice. "It is another name for Fenianism! Of course there are a few excep-

tions, some of the Home Rule members are gentlemen in every sense of the word, but the others—well—I blush when I think of them. If Gladstone and the Home Rulers combined together they could ruin Ireland, they would leave her not fit for respectable people to live in. So for that reason you must always support Lord Beaconsfield.”

“But the Home Rule movement seems popular with the people!”

“The people don’t understand what it means!” replied Maud. “The Irish are led too easily. Let a man speak well—let him address them in thunderous accents—let him talk about their wrongs, and their right to claim redress. Let him rave—let him rant—they will call him a *grand* man—they will believe all he says—they will fancy wrongs, where none exist! The stump orator can do a great deal with the Irish! Nothing goes down with them like a flow of words—the man who *can* talk, can lead them—and”—

“I wonder what they’d say if you would talk to them, and look as pretty as you do now!” interrupted Percy.

“Bosh! as if I should speak!”

“Why not? women do now-a-days.”

“Yes! women who forget themselves! who

forget what is due to their sex. I think a woman who would voluntarily harangue a mob ought to be shunned by her own sex, and pointed at with the finger of scorn by the other! Woman was intended by God to be man's help mate, she was not meant to be his rival, and that is what these women want to be. In Germany girls are taught to be satisfied with their lot in life—the women there don't clamour for their rights—they don't want to put themselves on equality with man! What business have women crying out for the franchise? I hope they'll never get it!"

"Why do you think women should not get the franchise?" asked Percy.

"Because they would vote always for the handsomest man, no matter if he were the least worthy," replied Maud.

"Are you quite sure? would you?"

"If I had to decide between two Conservatives, I would surely vote for the better looking, and every woman would do the same."

"They say they wouldn't!"

"I asked Mrs. Malone the question," replied Maud. "She would be entitled to the franchise if it were allowed. I asked her if

she would vote for Mr. Carr, who is a clever man, but very ugly, or Mr. Fraser, who is handsome as Adonis, and is a perfect noodle. What do you think she replied ?”

“What did she say ?”

“She said, ‘Mr. Carr is an ugly, little spalpeen ! I wouldn’t show such bad taste as to vote for the likes of him. I can tell you, Miss, I know a fine man, when I see him as well as the best lady in the land—in course I’d vote for Mr. Fraser.’ So spoke Mrs. Malone,” continued Maud, “and I’m quite sure all women would do the same, and therefore I say women are just as fit to have the franchise as Ireland is to have Home Rule !”

“Why isn’t Ireland fit to have Home Rule ?”

“Because the Irish are too hot-headed, they are too fond of fighting among themselves. Home Rule would mean daily rows, bitter feeling, party strife, and mob law—but we have wandered away from our subject—what are you going to do, Percy ?”

“If you wish it, I’ll go into Parliament, but I promise you, I’ll prove myself a nincompoop there !”

"No, you won't! I shan't let you!" in a very decided tone. "But when will you have a chance of getting in?"

"Captain Burton, the member for Littleleigh, wrote to Sir Charles lately, that he feared he should be obliged to resign, he is in bad health, and my father threw out a hint to me, but I didn't notice it."

"You ought to have tried to please him, but now you will tell him that you are anxious to get into Parliament."

"Yes!" said Percy. "By Jove! you're a girl after my father's heart, only I wish your hair was—no I don't!"

"Never mind my hair, sir! I'll manage to survive any remarks made about it by your father. I shan't mind even if he says carrots!"

A knock was heard at the door. It was understood the lovers were to be left alone when they were in possession of the drawing-room, and they were rarely disturbed, but now an imperative knock was heard.

"Come in," cried Maud.

Phoebe entered, looking somewhat disturbed.

"Mr. Langrishe," she said, "your man

wants to see you, he has got a telegram for you."

"Oh! bother!" exclaimed Percy, "I told him to take it on board. I don't see why he should come to me."

"You had better go to him," said Phœbe.

Percy left the room looking not too well pleased. He was expecting a telegram from the owner of the "Phryne," which was to start immediately on hearing where she was to go. She was ready, waiting for the telegram, and Percy told his man to open it, if it came, and go on board at once.

Jenkins was in the hall; he held a telegram in his hand.

"I opened it, sir, as you told me," he said, "but it isn't the one you thought. It is rather bad news, sir!"

Percy took it and read—

"Sir Charles is seriously ill. Come home at once."

"I guessed you'd go, sir, so I told them at the hotel. Shall I have your things ready for the mail to-night?"

"Yes, yes!" said Percy, who felt quite

bewildered. "Have everything ready. I'll follow you presently."

Percy returned to Maud, but she had already heard, for Phœbe told her. Jenkins mentioned the contents of the telegram.

Of course there was no question now of when the marriage was to take place. The serious illness of the baronet might mean a postponement for a considerable time.

Percy left by the mail steamer that evening. He longed to be with his father, but he hated leaving his *fiancée*.

How he wished he might take her with him, but that couldn't be, of course, so they parted, hoping to meet soon again.

CHAPTER IX.

KINGSTOWN is like every other watering place under the sun, for gossip is one of its chief recreations. Everybody talks about the affairs of everybody else, and seems to know all the ins and outs, the ups and downs, that take place in the society of this Irish Brighton.

Of course Percy's sudden departure for England was soon known, and the verdict of Mrs. Grundy's coterie was instantly given.

"That affair is all off," they said. The story of the sick baronet was all an invention; it was the best excuse the young man could make, and the O'Mahons had seen the last of Mr. Langrishe; they might put that match out of their heads. Others went even further, and wondered would there be an action for breach of promise; then some one discovered that Maud still wore her engagement ring, and more comments were made, and there was much wondering about the whys and the wherefores, but still the general

opinion was that the engagement was at an end.

Maud was asked the question point-blank by an inquisitive lady, who was almost a stranger.

"Excuse me," she replied, "but I don't discuss my private affairs with everybody, and the question of my engagement only concerns my own people."

This answer seemed to the gossips as proof positive that the affair was all off; however they soon got something else to turn their attention to, for Mr. and Mrs. Martin arrived back from their honeymoon trip to Killarney.

He was as pompous as a Lord Mayor—at least, so said Gerry. He looked remarkably self-satisfied, at all events, and seemed very proud of his beautiful young wife.

Eily was changed; there could be no doubt about it. She was lovely, but the sweet manner that charmed every one was gone; there was no youthful gush, no girlish flutter.

All that had passed away for ever. She was dignified, she was reserved, and she was like ice.

To nearly all she was the same—coldly, punctiliously polite; her manner to her hus-

band and mother was deferential. To her father and Gerry she was playful as of old, but there was something lacking; they felt it, although they could not tell what they missed. Maud only understood.

She and Eily were much the same to each other, but still there was a barrier between them, and it was caused by silence, for on one subject Eily never spoke.

"Do you think you can be happy?" asked Maud, one day soon after her sister's return.

"Never speak of that, darling!" replied Eily. "If ever I can talk of happiness, you may be sure I'll tell you quickly enough. The most I can hope for myself is to be contented. I know now that I made a mistake—a fatal mistake—but there must be silence between us on the subject."

Yes, it had already come to that! Eily had discovered that she had made a mistake. Since her marriage she had thought it all over. She knew she had done wrong; she had sacrificed her life, her happiness, for a chimera. The diamonds ought to have been given back. What should it matter if people knew about them and talked? In the first instance they were only given and accepted as a loan, and they could have been

returned. It was hardly likely that Stephen Martin would tell of how he tried to force a gift of diamonds on Mrs. O'Mahon's acceptance. He would have been silent.

Then, with regard to Wild Park, Eily shuddered when she remembered what she had done, for she knew her brother would despise her if he thought she sold herself to redeem the family acres for him.

It was all a cruel, bitter mistake! She had sacrificed her life, her happiness; she had done so voluntarily, and nothing remained for her but to try and make the best of it.

She shivered when she thought that such must be her *rôle* through life—to try and make the best of it.

Very many women could have made a very good thing of it in her place.

How they would have enjoyed the “cakes and ale!” How they would luxuriate in the possession of the *chiffons* so dear to women! How happy they would be in the enjoyment of wealth and position!

Not so poor Eily!

What would have been “cakes and ale” to others were as “dust and ashes” to her. She knew she had done wrong; she had done

an injury to herself and to another, and an injustice to Mr. Martin. She had sworn to love him.

God help her! How could she do it? How could she love him when her heart was no longer hers? It was gone; she could not recall it. She could only pray that in time she might forget, and that her life might be short.

The daily prayer of this fair young creature was, that soon she might sleep beneath a "green sod decked with daisies fair."

She had sworn to honour her husband, and to obey him.

The last she could and she would do! She was firmly resolved on that point. He should never have cause to complain of her; she was determined to obey him blindly in all things. In that one way she would endeavour to compensate for the rest. It was only a little thing, she thought, but at least she could give him perfect obedience.

To honour him was another matter. She used to think highly of him, and at one time she thought he was worthy of all honour, but now she knew better.

A man who could accept the sacrifice of a young girl's happiness, merely to satisfy him-

Rome for the winter, if Maud were not married until spring.

Mr. Martin and his fair young sister-in-law were civilly polite to each other, and nothing more. If her engagement with Percy had been broken off, as the gossips said, he would probably have ventured to snub her, but a young lady who was likely to be Lady Langrishe some day was worthy of attention. Therefore Mr. Martin was civil.

At last they were off—Mr., Mrs., and Miss Martin and suite—for Italy. So said the paragraph in the *Irish Times*. How often the suite means one solitary attendant, but the Martins were accompanied by a man, two maids, and the pug, though last, not at all least, even in his own opinion.

The O'Mahons went to see them off, and wave an adieu from the Carlisle pier; and with them we must say farewell to Eily for a time, and wish her and her party *bon voyage*.

Phœbe was enchanted to have Eily always with her, and she looked so delighted and happy that even Mr. Martin was pleased at the open love and admiration given by his daughter to his fair young wife.

When all the bridal visits were returned their proposed trip to the Continent was talked about. Eily was quite willing to go; nay, more, she was anxious to go; she wanted to get away from Kingstown before Harold Detmar's leave should expire. She did not wish to run the risk of meeting him. She did not want to see him ever again, and if he were in Dublin there was always the chance of coming against him, so when Mr. Martin spoke of going to Italy he found his wife was ready and eager to start.

Phœbe was in ecstasy, and she even infected Eily with a little of her gaiety. Puck was to go also. At first Mr. Martin demurred, he didn't like the idea of taking a dog about, but his wife looked so pained, and she asked him so prettily to allow Master Puggie to accompany them that the order was rescinded.

There had been no further talk about Maud's marriage, so it couldn't be soon, and the Martins would not come back until the time for it was fixed. They would remain in

Rome for the winter, if Maud were not married until spring.

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CHAPTER X.

WHEN Percy reached Fernleigh he found his father dangerously ill. There was a chance that he might rally, but it was so slight that the doctors did not consider themselves justified in holding out any hopes of his recovery. He might pull through, they said, but they were not prepared to say more.

At the first urgent symptoms Lady Langrishe telegraphed to her sister, Mrs. Detmar, to come to her. She and Harold started immediately, and they arrived twelve hours in advance of Percy.

On Harold's arrival Sir Charles mistook him for his son, and as he had been calling for Percy they did not undeceive him, they let him think that it was his son's hand he clasped, and even after Percy came he did not know the difference.

In a week there was a change for the better, and the doctors said there was hope, and from then there was a daily improvement.

At last Percy had time to look around,

Rome for the winter, if Maud were not married until spring.

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At last Percy had time to look around,

and he was shocked to see how ill his cousin was looking. He seemed to have aged several years in the few short weeks since they parted in Dublin.

Harold heard from Lady Langrishe of the engagement between Percy and Maud, but he did not refer to it. He never spoke on the subject, he couldn't bear to allude to the O'Mahon family.

Percy on the other hand did not like to talk to Harold of his love, he thought it would look like boasting because he was successful, and if he spoke of Maud there was a likelihood that Eily's name might be mentioned, and he didn't know how Harold might feel, so there was silence between them for some time. However, one day Percy at last spoke.

"Did you get the packet I sent you—I mean the one Eily gave me for you?"

"I did," replied Harold. Then after a pause, "Did you know she loved me?"

"She told me so. If I could have prevented her marriage I would have done so, but she said it was impossible."

"Yes, she wrote so to me. But if I knew that she loved me I would have carried her

off, even against her will. Percy, why did you not tell me?" cried Harold reproachfully.

"I promised her I would keep her secret," answered Percy. "I don't believe that her own people know, I am sure Mr. O'Mahon has not an idea but that she was a willing bride."

"Her mother must have influenced her."

"Not a doubt of it," replied Percy, "but now that it is all over, try and cheer up old man, rouse yourself a bit, try to be yourself once more."

"Never again, Percy! But I mean to rouse myself, for I must exchange. I couldn't stay in Ireland and run the risk of meeting her."

"There will be no chance of that. Maud tells me they start for the Continent in a few days, and will not return for some months."

"So much the better! That will give me time to look about," said Harold. "How I wish I could go into active service; I feel a longing to avenge myself on mankind; I feel a murderous thirst for blood. You will have to break it to my mother, Percy. You will have to tell her I mean to exchange."

"She will feel it awfully."

"I cannot help that! I must go away somewhere. I want a change, and I mean to have it, so you must prepare my mother!"

"I would rather not!" said Percy.

"You must do it! You owe me an *amende*; but for you things might have been different! No! no! I mustn't say that. I ought not to blame you. I suppose it is Kismet! The Fates were not propitious—Lachesis ordained otherwise—my destiny was not to be a happy one!"

There was a pause. Then after a while Harold spoke again.

"Do you remember, Percy," said he, "when we were boys here together going out to the wood yonder and getting our fortunes told by an old gipsy woman?"

"I have a hazy remembrance of something of the kind," replied Percy, in a doubtful tone.

"I remember it perfectly!" said his cousin. "I had forgotten all about it, but lately it has all come back to me. She told you that you should be rich—loved—happy—that you should be successful all through life—that you should rise in the world while I"—

"Oh, my God! I remember!" cried Percy.

"While I should"—

"Oh, don't! Your mother!"

"I should"— But the words died on Harold's lips. He said no more for Mrs. Detmar entered the room. She came to tell Percy that Sir Charles was awake, and wanted to see him.

The baronet made considerable progress during the last week, and was able to sit up a few hours every day.

"I want to talk to you, my boy!" he said, as Percy entered the room in obedience to his aunt's summons. "I am all right now for a little while, and I think your marriage ought to take place."

"I haven't the least objection, father, but Maud has!"

"She objects, and why?" asked the baronet uneasily.

"She has got an absurd notion into her head that I ought to have something to do!" replied Percy.

"Do! What does she mean?" testily cried Sir Charles.

"She says all idle men get into mischief.

She insists that I must do something, and she is very positive ! ”

“ What does she want you to do ? ”

“ She wants me to go into Parliament ! ”

“ Into Parliament ! ” cried the baronet, as he clapped his hands together. “ I’m proud of her ! I’m proud of your Maud ! I’m proud of her ! ”

“ Is there any chance of Burton’s resigning ? ” asked Percy.

“ He is only waiting for me to find a candidate. You can get in, the Liberals will never put up any one against you ! Will you stand ? ”

“ Of course, father ! ”

“ I’m proud of that girl ! ” said the baronet, “ and I want to see her. I have just been talking to your mother about it. I wish you to ask Mrs. O’Mahon and her daughter to come over. Beg of her to come Percy. Tell Maud she will gladden your poor old father’s heart. Do you think will she come ? ”

“ I’m sure she will if I ask her. But ”—

“ I don’t want any buts, and I won’t have any. I want to see this girl ! ”

"But if our marriage were hurried on it"—

"Hurry as you might, still I may be gone before then!"

"Don't say so, father!"

"I am better now; but I know I am only patched up for a time, so I want to see the girl. There can be no objection to her coming with her mother or father, or both. I want to see her, and if you won't write and ask her to come I must only get some one else to do it!"

"I'll write of course. But"—

"Damn it, Percy! What's the matter with you?" cried the baronet angrily. "I believe you don't want her to come!"

"Indeed, father, you're mistaken! I really should like you to see her. But"—

"You don't mean to say that you've changed your mind?" queried Sir Charles in an agitated voice.

"Oh, no!" replied Percy. "But the fact is, I'm afraid, perhaps you won't like her!"

"Not like her! I'm proud of her as it is. Of course I'll like the girl who makes you go into Parliament! You needn't be afraid that I shan't like her!"

"But, father!" with a gasp, "her hair is not dark!"

"Damn it, man! What do I care what colour her hair is! I don't mind if it be red, green, or purple! I want to see her, that's all!"

"All right. If you don't mind about the hair I'll telegraph. But it isn't any of the colours you said. She has golden, auburn hair."

Percy had dreaded telling his father that Maud was fair-haired, and he fully expected an outburst of anger from the baronet when he should learn the truth, so was very much relieved when his confession on the subject was made.

Later the baronet confided to Harold that he was disappointed.

"I had hopes that he would have been married to the other sister," said Sir Charles. "She is dark-haired, and Percy fancied her at first; but it was only a passing fancy. He really is in love now!"

Harold winced at these words. He thought how much Percy's passing fancy cost him, for he could not divest himself of the idea that but for his cousin's interference in the

beginning that things might have been different between him and Eily. He assured Sir Charles that Percy had chosen wisely.

"I think she is exactly the wife suited for him," he said.

"Of course Percy thinks so," answered Sir Charles. "But is she all that he says?"

"She is lovely, very clever, very well informed. Knows a deal more than many women double her age. She is energetic, and I think she is ambitious! At the same time she is not marrying Percy from worldly motives. I feel sure she loves him truly, and I believe she will be a good wife to him. But she won't allow him to remain idle, and I shall not be surprised if she manages to rule him."

"That won't hurt him!" replied Sir Charles. "Husbands who are kept in order by their wives are often the happiest men. Now that my day is nearly done I admit it, not that I ever should or could have submitted to anybody; but Percy is different. He is the first fair-haired Langrishe, and he is not like one of the old stock. Perhaps when the grave closes over me, with my sallow skin and dark locks that the vile

temper of the family will be ended, and a new race sunny-tempered and sunny-haired shall dwell here. 'All's well that ends well,' and if Percy is happy with his fair-haired Maud I suppose I ought to be satisfied, only—I can't help wishing he had chosen the sister!"

"She would never have asked him to go into Parliament!" said Harold. "The girl he has chosen is different. She will urge Percy on, she will make him work, and she is the bitterest little Conservative in the kingdom."

"Then I'll say no more about her hair, and I'll try not to think of it. How I long to see her! I hope she will come soon!"

"You may be sure she will!" replied Harold.

CHAPTER XI.

There has fall'n a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the gate,
She is coming, my dove, my dear,
She is coming, my life, my fate.

PERCY telegraphed to Maud and Mrs. O'Mahon and begged they would accede to his father's desire, and come over at once to Fernleigh.

The telegram reached Kingstown the afternoon after the Martins' departure for the Continent when Maud was feeling very *triste*. Low spirits rarely troubled her; but it was no wonder she felt lonely. She missed Eily very much, and lately Phœbe had been so constantly with her that her absence was also felt.

The arrival of the postman was the one event in Maud's life. She got a daily letter from her lover, and of course had to reply to it; but after that duty was accomplished there were many hours for her to feel dull.

That morning there had been a family council to decide whether the house at Kings-

town should be kept on for another month or not. Maud and her father gained the day. They both preferred to return to Wild Park.

The telegram from Percy came that afternoon, and then there was another council held. There was no question as to Maud's not going, but they couldn't at first decide who was to accompany her. Mrs. O'Mahon did not want to go, she knew Harold was at Fernleigh, and she did not wish to meet him, so she tried to induce Mr. O'Mahon to go with Maud. But he was not willing to do so, he wanted to get home he said; however, at last it was arranged that Mrs. O'Mahon should accompany her daughter.

Accordingly a telegram was despatched to Percy to say they would start the following evening.

The baronet was told they were coming, and the news agitated him so much that he got a slight relapse, and when Mrs. and Miss O'Mahon arrived at Fernleigh he was very ill again, but in a few days he began to mend.

Lady Langrishe was delighted with her future daughter-in-law. Indeed Maud won golden opinions from every one, Mrs. Detmar

included. She was quite prepared to dislike Maud, she felt very bitter against her for she was labouring under a mistake. She guessed her son fancied some girl, and she had taken it into her head that Percy had cut him out, and that Maud was the girl. Some random words of Harold's on his arrival home led her to think thus, so she felt disposed to be distant with Maud ; but the girl charmed her completely, and so she told her son.

"I cannot help liking Miss O'Mahon," she said, "although on your account I felt prejudiced against her."

"Why?" asked Harold. "What on earth have I to do with her?"

"Why? I thought she gave you up for Percy!"

"I never even thought of her, mother! In the name of wonder, what put such an idea into your head?"

"I know you and he are not the same friends as you used to be!"

"No girl ever gave me up for Percy, so you've been on a wrong tack!"

The mother had been on a wrong tack!

She knew something ailed her son; she

felt sure he had met with a disappointment. It was evident he and Percy were not as friendly as in former days, so she put two and two together, and came to the conclusion that Maud was the cause of all, so she was very surprised when Harold told her that he never thought of the girl, and that no one gave him up for Percy.

Still, she was not satisfied. There was something wrong, of that she felt certain, and she tried to find out. She questioned Mrs. O'Mahon, but failed to elicit the least information that could possibly put her on the right scent. Of course Mrs. O'Mahon could give a tolerably good guess as to what was wrong with Harold, but it was not likely that she would tell, so poor Mrs. Detmar went on from day to day without getting any nearer the truth.

Maud was a week at Fernleigh before the baronet was able to see her; he was all anxiety to receive her, but the doctor would not allow him to run any risk. But at last permission was given, and Percy was told to ask Maud to come. She did not expect the summons that day, and was somewhat startled when Percy came and told her

he was sent to fetch her to the baronet; however, in a few minutes she recovered her composure, and went with her lover to his father's room. She wore an olive green silk and cashmere costume, soft lace twisted round her throat, in which was fastened a dark crimson rose. She looked lovely, and her slightly heightened colour was most becoming.

As she walked across the room, Sir Charles started with surprise. When she held out her hand to him he did not take it; he was gazing at her lovely face; but he quickly recovered himself, and caught her hand in both his.

"Won't you kiss me?" he asked.

Maud stooped, and her bright, cherry lips kissed the shrivelled cheek of the baronet.

"You never told me you were going to marry a beauty," he said to Percy.

"Why, father, I told you often and often that Maud was very lovely!"

"Please don't talk about me in my presence," said Maud. "I find it embarrassing."

"Very well," said Sir Charles. "Now tell me, how did you come to fancy Percy?"

"I don't know, I'm sure! My sister praised him so much that I felt predisposed in his favour before I saw him, and then when we met I suppose it was our fate to like each other."

"He's a lucky fellow! I had no idea of your beauty until"—

Maud held up a warning finger.

"No! I promise you I'll pay no compliments," continued Sir Charles, "for I want to talk business. You wish Percy to go into Parliament?"

"Oh! yes," cried Maud eagerly. "Is there a chance for him?"

"There is! We'll get him in, but I want you to do something to please me."

"What?"

"Will you promise?"

"That's hardly fair," said Maud; "but I'm sure you would not ask me to do anything that was not right, so I promise. What do you want me to do?"

Percy grinned and looked very pleased. He knew what was coming.

"I want you to marry Percy at once," said his father.

"At once?" queried Maud. "I told him

we could be married when you were a little better if there was a chance of his getting a seat."

"I don't mean that! I want you to marry immediately, to-morrow! next day! or, at all events, next week!"

A bright blush suffused Maud's face.

"I don't know how that could be," she said.

"But you promised me!" eagerly cried Sir Charles. "Pray don't go back of your word; Percy is my only child; I want to see him married. Cannot you consent? Is there any reason why you shouldn't? A special license can be got, you can be married here, and I can be present. Let me have the pleasure of seeing my son married; if there is any delay, I may not live to call you daughter!"

The old man looked pleadingly at the bright young beauty, who felt herself placed in an awkward dilemma. Of course she naturally thought of the things that every girl so placed would think of. Could there be a trousseau?—a wedding dress? or did he mean that she was to get married without even one new gown?

To that she would never consent.

Percy saw that she was considering. He half expected that she would refuse, for he thought she would not be satisfied to marry unless her sister was present at the wedding. He passed his arm round her waist.

"Dearest!" he said, "please my father by consenting to our immediate marriage, and you'll make me the happiest of men!"

She paused for a moment; then she replied—

"I'll see what mother says; if she approves papa must come."

"Of course, dear! God bless you, Maud! May you and Percy be happy together!"

"Thanks for your good wishes! I'll try to make him happy!"

"And you'll succeed," said her lover.

"I'm not so sure of that!" she replied.
"You don't know my faults; you can't guess all that's in my heart."

"I know not, I ask not, what fault's in thy heart;
To me thou art lovely whatever thou art!"

replied Percy with *empressement*.

"If you're getting poetic, I think I ought to go and talk to mother!"

"Yes, dear!" said the baronet. "Give her my compliments, and beg of her to consent to the marriage. I am sure you are a sensible girl, and can bear to get married without half the parish looking on."

Maud sought Mrs. O'Mahon at once, and found that already Lady Langrishe had been speaking to her on the subject. She was quite willing the marriage should take place at once, and she was sure Mr. O'Mahon would not object, so he was written to and told to come over.

Mrs. O'Mahon was an energetic woman when need required her to rouse herself. Of course her daughter could not be married without a trousseau, but in London everything can be managed in a few days, so the next morning she started for town, where in an incredibly short space of time she was able to get all necessary things. Percy went up with her to arrange some business matters, so that Maud spent a good deal of her time with Sir Charles, who every day got to like her more and more, and his admiration of her beauty went so far that he insisted on the picture of the Queen of Cyprus being hung in his room. He saw the wonderful resem-

blance she bore to Titian's painting without even the accessories of costume.

In a few days Mr. O'Mahon and Gerry arrived. Sir Charles liked the genial, frank Irishman at first sight, and they soon got to be very good friends. The baronet proposed making such a liberal settlement on Maud that Mr. O'Mahon was astonished as well as pleased.

Maud had to write and tell Eily of her approaching marriage. The letter cost her some tears, for she felt it very much that her sister could not be present at her marriage. It would be absurd for her to come back such a long way, for the Martins were at Bellaggio; besides, the Detmars were at Fernleigh, and Maud rightly guessed that Eily would not like to meet Harold. She did not know all, but she knew enough to suspect that her sister would avoid such a meeting; therefore she felt sure that Eily would not come.

She was right. Eily wrote her a kind, loving letter, and said the distance was too far for her to return for the wedding, and that they should spend the winter in Rome.

When Maud's letter reached Bellaggio, Mr.

Martin said to his wife that he would go back if she wished. Eily thanked him, and told him she did not care to go. He didn't know that Harold was at Fernleigh, and he didn't know that his wife would do anything, suffer anything, sooner than meet the young officer, and he thought that she refused to go to please him, for although he offered to return he was not very willing to do so.

Eily need not have been afraid of meeting Harold; if she came he would have gone away, and then his mother would have guessed the truth.

Mrs. O'Mahon met Miss Ferrers in London, and she was so pleased about Maud that she got a very handsome trousseau for her grand-niece, besides giving the same dowry that she gave to Eily.

Much to Mrs. O'Mahon's consternation, Miss Ferrers announced her intention of going to the wedding.

"I knew Lady Langrishe long ago," she said, "and I have written to ask her may I go. I have just sent the letter to the post."

What a position for her niece! Mrs. O'Mahon was fairly frightened out of her

wits ; she was never in such a fix, and got quite nervous.

“Those miserable diamonds,” she thought. “The whole thing will be sure to get out.”

She didn’t know what to do. She was afraid her husband might say something to the old lady about the diamonds, and then—what should become of her? But fortune favoured her once again, for much to her surprise, Miss Ferrers presented her with a very handsome suite of diamond ornaments.

Safety again ! she could breathe once more—she might talk of the ornaments given by her aunt, and who was to know, unless very minute inquiries were made, when the gift took place.

The diamonds had been to her like the sword of Damocles !

Often and often she regretted having been so weak as to accept them, they were a perpetual cause of anxiety to her, she never could tell what moment the whole truth might come out, and what should become of her then ?

Her daughters might shield her, but she felt certain her husband would never forgive her. He was a quiet, easy-going man as a

rule, but if he were roused, his anger was something terrible; however, now she really possessed diamonds, given her by her aunt, and it was possible she could manage concealment about the former gift, but she would have to be on her guard while Miss Ferrers was at Fernleigh. She should watch that no private interview took place between her husband and aunt, but she did not anticipate that, as the old lady had not forgiven the Irishman for winning her niece, so she was sure Miss Ferrers would not seek an interview with him, and she knew her husband would not look for one either, but in any case she would have an anxious time of it.

How she longed to get back to Wild Park. Once there she knew her secret would be safe enough, for it would be safe in her own keeping. There would be no danger of her being like the barber of Midas. She would not whisper her secret to the ground, so there would be no risk of its being told by the reeds and the grasses.

She would be safe at Wild Park. Her daughters she knew would never tell, but oh! how much happier she should be, if

there were no secret to be kept from her husband.

She made a mistake, and she would have to hide her folly.

It weighed heavily on her, and she found it a harder burden than she expected, but she must keep her husband from knowing the truth at all costs.

The pricks of conscience are hard to bear sometimes !

No ! they are always hard to bear, and Mrs. O'Mahon was getting to feel quite an old woman, she was so troubled. She had done wrong !

Conscience told her so, and she could not find one excuse for her conduct.

CHAPTER XII.

MAUD's wedding day dawned bright and clear, it was one of those lovely days that occur sometimes in late autumn. The sky was as blue as in June, the sun was as bright, only his rays lacked the power which they possessed in the summer, and the air was soft and balmy. It was a day to remind one of the glory of the summer passed away, there was nothing to give even a hint of what was coming, it was hard to think that winter was fast approaching.

Maud was married to Percy in the picture gallery, in the presence of the members of their families, and the servants. The rector who married them, had christened Percy. He, his wife, and grandchild were the only strangers present. The latter, a little tot of six years old, was bridesmaid, and never was seen a more lovely pair than the fair young bride, and her little fairy attendant, who seemed almost overwhelmed with the importance of her office.

A long row of men and women, dark-skinned, dark-haired, dark-eyed, looked on in silence from their frames. In all the pictures in that gallery there was no likeness of a fair Langrishe, they had all been dark, and the first fair descendant of the house was Percy. They had been a good-looking race, and a certain Augusta was celebrated for her beauty in her day, but what were her charms pictured on the canvas compared to the fair loveliness of the young bride who cast her lot with the scion of the stately Augusta's race?

Percy was the last in the direct line, and he was the first fair Langrishe.

Sir Charles looked at his pictured progenitors, and then at Percy and Maud, and he knew his son had chosen well; the pair were well matched, and none could see them, without thinking them a handsome couple.

"There will be no more dark Langrishes," said the baronet to Harold, "a new race begins with Percy, and I hope his children will be sunny-tempered as he is. The stern, bad-tempered, unforgiving race ends with me!"

Percy took his bride away with the blessings and good wishes of their friends. All

were pleased at the marriage, but none so much as the baronet who retired immediately after the departure of the bride and bridegroom, and as he sank off in a doze, he murmured—

“ We’ll keep that damned sneak out, after all, he may say good-bye to Fernleigh ! ”

Miss Ferrers did come to the wedding. She was very curious to see Harold, she was thinking she was not acting right in leaving him her wealth, but now that both her grandnieces were settled, she considered she was at liberty to dispose of her money as she pleased, but if she found Harold were not worthy, she would leave her money to a hospital. An O’Mahon should never get it, of that she was determined, so she never thought of Gerry. So when Miss Ferrers arrived at Fernleigh, she came with the intention of deciding the fate of her wealth. Percy was introduced to her in London, she liked him, she found him frank and open, and his good looks pleased her. When she saw Harold she was rather disappointed, she hoped to have been able to trace in him some likeness to his dead father, but there was not even the slightest resemblance,

there was nothing to remind her of her early love, no trick of manner or speech, no feature, in fact nothing to recall remembrance. Harold was like his mother's family.

Mr. O'Mahon met his wife's aunt in a most cordial manner, he thanked her for her generosity to his wife in giving her such diamond ornaments, and expressed much gratitude for her great liberality to his daughters.

"Say no more, Mr. O'Mahon!" replied Miss Ferrers. "I always intended doing all I could for your girls, and as for the diamonds, they are not worth making a fuss about! Say nothing more about them now or after!"

So the danger was past!

Mrs. O'Mahon was present, and heard what her husband and aunt said to each other, and she felt relieved for she knew neither would allude to the subject again. She was safe, and she rejoiced.

After the departure of the newly married couple, Miss Ferrers invited Gerry to take a walk with her in the park. Immediately Mrs. O'Mahon offered to accompany them also.

"No! thank you, Ellen!" answered Miss Ferrers. "I prefer to go alone with your son. I want to talk to him, I want to see what he is like!"

The mother trembled.

Gerry might expose her unintentionally, he might talk of that unlucky fancy ball, and if he did, he might mention the diamonds. If she could only put him on his guard, but she dare not do it, that would lead to a full explanation with him, and bad as it was to tell her daughters, it would be a thousand times worse to admit her folly to him.

Gerry was her favourite child, she could not bear that he should scorn her. She knew her daughters did, but she did not care so much, as long as she retained her son's affection and esteem.

She must let things take their chance, she could do nothing, and she felt that she was about to be exposed.

Gerry and Miss Ferrers went along together, they talked of the weather, the harvest, the garden, the park, and a hundred other things, and at last they came round to the wedding of that day.

"Do you know," said Miss Ferrers, "I

half expected Mr. Langrishe would have been married to Eily ? ”

“ Why so ? ” asked Gerry.

“ Your mother told me in her letters that he paid her very marked attention in Dublin last winter.”

“ Oh ! as for that, I don’t see how she could call it marked. Detmar paid Eily just as much attention.”

“ Did Harold Detmar know Eily ? ” asked Miss Ferrers, in a tone of surprise.

“ Of course he did. I always thought he meant something.”

“ Tell me, Gerry,” said the old lady, “ since when did he know her ? ”

“ From the beginning ; Percy and Detmar were both introduced to Eily the same evening, and they were both attentive. Then they came to Athlone for that fancy ball, and from the time Percy saw Maud, he went in for her. I never can make out why Eily married Martin, for I thought she liked Detmar.”

All this was a revelation to Miss Ferrers ; she never suspected that Harold knew her relatives ; she thought their acquaintance was only a recent affair, just since the marriage

of Maud and Percy was arranged. She couldn't comprehend what motive her niece could have had in keeping back the name of Harold; she was completely puzzled, and she questioned and cross-questioned Gerry until she managed to get from him his secret thoughts.

"I am afraid Eily married Martin from pique," said Gerry. "I don't know the ins and outs of it, but suddenly Detmar ceased to visit, and the next thing was Eily's engagement. I shouldn't believe St. Peter, if he were to appear before me this minute, and tell me Eily cared for Martin." Then, after a pause, he added, "Now I begin to think Detmar liked her, for he looks awfully down in the mouth. He is not the same man."

"Do you think your mother urged your sister to accept Mr. Martin?" asked the old lady.

"I don't think it, for I'm sure of it. Look here, aunt," he said, as he stopped and faced her on the path, "I think you're a brick, and I'll tell you the truth. Mother made a regular fool of herself about Martin, she could do nothing without him, go nowhere without him. I know people were

talking, although, of course, I never heard what was said, so, after all, it was a good job that Eily married him. That shut them up."

"Do you mean to say that there was a flirtation between your mother and Mr. Martin?"

"That was what people thought—but the fact was he made up to mother for Eily's sake—she backed him up, and that was how that marriage came about."

Miss Ferrers was sorry to learn all this. She thought that Eily's marriage was one of inclination, although it seemed strange to her that a young girl could willingly choose a husband nearly as old as her father, but such things happened sometimes. Gerry undeceived her, and he imbued her with his idea, and that was that Mrs. O'Mahon induced her daughter to accept Mr. Martin, while she was feeling some temporary pique against Harold Detmar.

The old lady felt very angry with her niece, angry with Eily, angry with Harold, and also angry with herself. She was vexed that instead of building *châteaux en Espagne* about Harold, and either of her fair young

relatives, that she had not sought out the young man. If she had done so, and learned that he was in Dublin, why things might have fallen out as she wished. Gerry absolutely told her that at one time he looked upon Percy and Harold as his two probable brothers-in-law. Then, from some cause unknown, Harold suddenly retired.

"Do you think did Eily refuse him?" she asked.

"I am sure she didn't, for I don't believe he asked her. Some mischief was made between them—I daresay mother and Martin could tell. I asked Maud but she either didn't know or wouldn't tell."

The rest of the walk took place in silence. The old lady ruminated on all she heard, and she returned to the house in no pleasant frame of mind. The instant Mrs. O'Mahon caught sight of the stern countenance of her aunt she lost all hope, her heart sank into her very boots, for she felt sure that all was known.

By-and-by Miss Ferrers questioned her—

"Why did you never tell me that Captain Detmar was paying attention to Eily?"

The question was so very different from

what she expected that she gave a gasp of relief.

"I didn't think he meant anything!" she replied. "I didn't think it of any importance, and I didn't know you would care to hear about everybody!"

"Don't equivocate, Ellen!" said the old lady sternly. "You knew I was anxious to hear every particular about your girls. Now tell me the truth. Why did you never mention about Captain Detmar?"

"Well, aunt! you told me to beware of soldiers, that they made love without meaning it. You remember saying that?"

"I do perfectly!"

"Well then, Captain Detmar was a soldier, and I didn't like to say anything about him."

"I see!" said Miss Ferrers. "I'm sorry I ever said so, and I'm sorrier you were not more explicit. I would rather have seen your daughter married to Harold Detmar than to any one else. Such a marriage would have pleased me beyond anything. I would have settled them in life, they should never have wanted for anything. It is a pity, Ellen, you were not more explicit!"

"But Eily is very well married!"

"Yes, in a worldly point of view ! But is she happy ? Does she love her husband ? Did she marry him of her free-will ? "

"There is no such thing as a forced marriage now-a-days ! " answered Mrs. O'Mahon in a confident tone.

She was no longer afraid. Evidently her aunt had not been told anything to arouse her suspicions.

"Well ! if your daughter is not happy you are to blame ! " said Miss Ferrers as she left the room.

Later she sought an interview with Harold, and he was surprised beyond measure at what he heard from her. She told him of her love for his father, and told him that he, the son of her only love, was to be her heir. Harold tried to dissuade her from leaving him her money ; but he could not turn her from her purpose. If she made any change, she said, it would be to bequeath it to a hospital.

"In case I die before you ? " asked Harold.

"What nonsense ! "

"Life is uncertain ! " he said. "Make some provision ! "

"My will has been made for years," she

replied. "It is too late to change it even if I felt inclined. If you had married one of my grand-nieces I should have been very pleased." Harold Detmar changed colour as she spoke, and she noticed that he did so. But she wanted to come at the truth, so she asked—

"Who made mischief between you and Eily?"

Harold paused before replying. He didn't wish to speak of his love to a stranger. But then he remembered she had just told him of her love for his father, she had told him the secret that had been buried in her heart for years. If she had given her confidence unasked ought he not to reply truthfully to her question?

"No one made mischief between us!" he answered sadly.

"Did you love her?"

"I loved her—nay! I love her still, and I shall love her as long as my life lasts!"

Miss Ferrers looked at him in astonishment.

"Did she know of your love?"

"I told her of my love!" he replied.

"And she refused you?"

“She refused me! Please let us talk of something else. My love dream is ended—that is all!”

They said no more on the subject. But Miss Ferrers was more puzzled than ever, and she felt convinced that her niece was to blame somehow; but it was too late now. Things could not be mended.

She left Fernleigh next day although pressed to remain; but she preferred to go for she felt dissatisfied with Mrs. O'Mahon, and at parting was very cool to her, while to every one else she was most cordial, and she invited Gerry and Harold to visit her after Christmas.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE bride and bridegroom did not make a long honeymoon trip, they only went to Paris for a fortnight. Percy did not like to go further, for the doctor warned him that his father was in a very precarious state of health, and might break down again any minute; but happily there was no need to summon them home hastily.

When they arrived at Fernleigh great preparations had been made to welcome the heir and his bride home. All the tenants met them, and gave them a most enthusiastic greeting, which pleased the baronet excessively.

His health had much improved, and he went as far as the gate lodge to meet the young couple. The mere fact of Percy's marriage had such an effect on his spirits that the doctor said he had got a new lease of life.

Immediately after their return home Percy set about canvassing, so he and Maud went over to Littleleigh, and much to his consternation he found the Liberals were before

him. They suspected a probable vacancy. Some incautious friend of Major Burton had spoken of his health, and said that he would surely be obliged to resign, for he could not remain in England; so the Liberals stole a march on the Conservatives, and had sent down canvassers on behalf of their candidate. They had not named one; but they wanted to see how the land lay.

In some cases the constituents would make no pledge. They would not believe in a vacancy until it was a *fait accompli*. But in many others support was promised, and the Liberals thought they had a very good chance of gaining the seat which had hitherto been in the Conservatives' possession.

Percy was startled. He thought there would not be the least difficulty, and he found himself in the position of having to face a contested election. He expected to be returned without opposition.

If he had only himself to please he would have retired gracefully, for he would never appear in the front of his own free-will so much did he fear defeat. But here Maud came to his rescue; she would allow nothing of the kind, and before they left Littleleigh he had been promised the support

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of several who had already given pledges to the other side.

Percy's appearance on the scene caused a change. It was well known he had refused to stand before, and the constituents did not expect him to come forward, and intended giving their support to the Liberal side ; but they considered he had a claim on them. He belonged to the county, and Sir Charles had been their representative in Parliament for many years, and before him his father had been member. With Sir Charles they could find no fault, and regretted when he retired in favour of a stranger ; but now, if his son came forward, of course their support was due to him.

In a few days Major Burton's resignation was announced, and at the same time Percy's address to the constituents appeared.

The Liberal party had not expected this, and it was a blow to their hopes. They knew he had refused to stand before, and were not at all prepared for his coming forward. The aspect of affairs was totally changed ; still, they made a semblance of fight, for a certain young barrister issued an address, and canvassing on his behalf was *resorted to*, but met with little success.

Percy was known to the constituents, and was popular with them, and where they had given half-promises to the Liberal party, it was found they had completely veered round. They promised Mr. Langrishe and young Madam, they said, and they wouldn't break their word to them, and they would vote for him.

Then the writ was issued, and there was the prospect of a contested election.

Percy was anxious and nervous, while Maud laughed at his fears and prophesied a triumph.

She was right, for at the last minute the Liberal barrister retired from the contest, he knew he should only meet with an overwhelming defeat, and on the principle that discretion is the better part of valour, he thought it best to withdraw, for—

He who fights and runs away,
Will live to fight another day.

He hoped to stand for somewhere else some other time, and he could come forward without the stigma of defeat. A future opponent should not be able to say, "Behold the beaten candidate of Littleleigh."

Mr. Langrishe was duly returned as the

member, he was exceedingly pleased at the turn affairs had taken, and so was every one except Maud. She only was disappointed, she wanted her husband to have had the *éclat* of winning the election, she wanted him to have had the glory of it.

To be returned without opposition was only half a victory in her estimation.

The country houses were full of visitors, and parties of all kinds were going on. Of course the new member and his bride were invited everywhere ; many entertainments were given in their honour, and Maud was immensely admired, everywhere she was queen of the revels.

She seemed to grow handsomer every day, her happiness added to her beauty if that were possible ; she was intensely happy, and so was her husband.

Lady Langrishe was satisfied, and the old baronet was pleased.

The two things he longed to see were accomplished.

Percy was married, and Percy was a member of Parliament.

There was only one thing more that Sir Charles wished for !

BOOK THE THIRD.



IMMORTELLLES.



CHAPTER I.

As Christmas drew near the health of Sir Charles improved, so very much so that he expressed a wish to have some gaiety at Fernleigh. There had been no festivities to speak of since Percy came of age, and over eight years had elapsed since then, so it was time to renew the gay doings of former days, for in years past the owners of Fernleigh were celebrated for hospitality.

There had been no Christmas visitors of late, but once again, the baronet wished to have the house filled, so Lady Langrishe sent out invitations, and on Christmas Eve some twenty guests assembled in the house, among them, Mrs. Detmar and Harold, Mr., Mrs. O'Mahon and Gerry.

Mrs. O'Mahon was looking ill and worried, the blooming matron of a year ago, was greatly changed ; and Maud was much exercised in her mind, when she saw her mother looking so unlike herself.

“ What ails you, mother ? ” she asked.

"Nothing, dear! I sleep and eat tolerably well, so there cannot be much wrong," she answered, with a sigh.

But Maud knew there must be something astray, so by dint of continual questioning, she at last discovered that her mother was fretting about Eily, for she had reason to suspect that her poor daughter was unhappy. Maud was immensely concerned at this news, for in no way had her sister given her the very smallest hint that anything was wrong, and she thought that at least Eily was contented.

Maud frequently heard from her, but the letters were always short, and were mostly descriptions of the places she visited, her last contained nothing about herself, not even a word, it was all about Rome.

"Why do you think the darling is unhappy mother?" asked Maud.

"Alas! I know it but too well, for she wrote me one letter of reproach, which she told me I was not to answer on any account."

"What did she say?"

"She said she forgave me!" answered Mrs. O'Mahon, "but that if I knew how

things were with her, that I could never forgive myself. Oh! Maud, I am miserable about her!" she added, with a sob.

"I wish they would come home," said Maud, sighing.

"How I wish they would!"

Mrs. O'Mahon was quite right, her daughter was very unhappy, for a few days later, a letter arrived from Phœbe to Maud, and it contained a long account of Mr. Martin's extraordinary behaviour. It appeared that he watched his wife from morning till night, he would hardly allow her to speak to any one, he insisted on reading all the letters she received, and all she wrote, so there was no chance of her being able to write anything in confidence to her mother or sister.

He watched his daughter also, and he would not allow her and Eily to be alone together even for a minute, and he dismissed his wife's maid, because one day she dared to pity her mistress, in the hearing of her master.

Phœbe concluded her letter by saying that her father's jealousy was enough to drive one mad, that she wished Eily and she could get away from him somewhere, and begged Maud

to devise some plan to get them home, for that then they should at least have the consolation of having friends near. She warned Maud against replying to her letter, for sometimes her father insisted on reading her correspondence also.

Phœbe's letter was like a bomb-shell flung into the midst of the family circle, and for the first time in her life Maud was hysterical, and had to keep her room for the day.

Of course Percy saw the letter, and he told Harold how affairs stood. He, poor fellow, was deeply grieved, it was enough for him to have lost his love without having the misery of knowing that she was unhappy.

That her husband was a tyrant there could be no doubt from all his daughter said. Maud and her mother talked over the matter again and again ; they wondered how they could induce Mr. Martin to bring his family home, the more they thought about it, the more difficult it seemed, for if he suspected that Phœbe had let them know how matters were, he would only be more severe to his woman-kind.

Mrs. O'Mahon was overwhelmed with grief, and her jolly, good-humoured husband was

quite unlike himself after he heard of his daughter's unhappiness. He wanted to start off for Rome at once, or to write to Mr. Martin, but both his proposals were negatived, and on reflection he saw that it was wiser for him not to interfere until Eily herself complained of her husband's treatment.

Harold thought much, and at last he hit on a plan to drive the Martins home from Rome. It would be agony for him, but if he could do this small service to his lost love, he cared little for giving pain to himself, he said nothing to any one of his plan, but the next day at lunch, he casually mentioned, that he was going to Italy shortly, and intended visiting Rome.

Maud gave him a quick glance of inquiry, he seemed unmoved, but she saw there was a stern resolve about his manner that was unusual.

"Have you forgotten, Detmar, that you and I promised to visit Miss Ferrers?" asked Gerry.

"No! I have not forgotten. I shall write and ask her to let me go later. You ought to come with me. You would see your sister in Rome."

"I should like to go awfully! that would be jolly!" said Gerry, who was in total ignorance of the contents of Phœbe's letter; he knew his father and mother were rather upset, but he thought it was on account of Maud's hysterical attack.

"Well, then come!" said Harold, "Miss Ferrers will let us off."

"I am willing to go, but I am not my own master—it depends on the governor," replied Gerry, as he looked at his father.

Mr. O'Mahon thought that the presence of a member of her family would be some protection to Eily, so he said—

"You can go Gerry, if you like. I know Captain Detmar won't let you get into mischief."

So it was settled that Harold and Gerry were to go to Italy together, and Mrs. O'Mahon cheered up considerably, for she thought things would be better when Eily had her brother near her. Maud too, was much pleased, and she guessed Harold had some end in view, but she did not like to question him.

Harold wrote to Miss Ferrers, and so did Maud, and whatever they said to the old lady,

she was not only resigned to lose her promised visitors, but sent Gerry a cheque for £100, which very much surprised her grand-nephew, who had never previously received even to the value of sixpence from her.

In the meantime, the visitors at Fernleigh were enjoying themselves immensely, the good old times were revived again, and the baronet was able to take his place at the dinner-table every day. For the new year invitations had been issued for a ball, at first Lady Langrishe did not contemplate having such an entertainment, she thought her husband would not be able to bear it, but he was more anxious for the ball than the youngest in the house.

“Invite everybody!” he said, “be sure you ask every good-looking woman and girl in the county—let it be done well—I have a private and particular reason for giving this ball.”

Of course his commands could not be gainsaid. Lady Langrishe guessed his reason, if no one else did, she thought he wanted to see Maud in company with other beauties, he wished to compare her with others. Every day the old baronet liked his daughter-in-

law more and more, and he seemed to think that nothing could be good enough for her.

"What are you going to wear at the ball, queenie?" he asked.

"Percy wishes me to wear white," she replied.

"He's right! white always looks well!"

The night arrived, and when Maud was about to retire to dress, her father-in-law called her into his room.

"I have a new year's gift for you," he said, "I have an idea that if such a thing were possible, these ornaments will add to your beauty."

He handed her a case containing a superb suite of sapphire and diamond ornaments, and it is needless to say that Maud thanked him with effusion for his magnificent gift.

"That will do, my dear!" he said, "say no more. I want you to look your best to-night."

Maud did look her best, even her husband thought he never saw her look so lovely. She helped Lady Langrishe to receive the guests, while Sir Charles sat a little way apart, and he watched with keen interest the numerous arrivals.

All the beauties of Yorkshire were assembled that night at Fernleigh, but not one could compare with Maud, she eclipsed them all. She was so surpassingly lovely that even the women extolled her beauty, and very rarely does such a thing occur. When women declare that another woman is lovely, her beauty must be of a high order, for as a rule, no woman likes to be obliged to acknowledge the loveliness of another ; it is always done very grudgingly, and if possible a *but* is put into the praise. In Maud's case there was no opportunity for a *but*.

Sir Charles saw for himself, that she surpassed all, besides he could hear the remarks of the guests, and all he heard pleased him.

Colonel Bushby, who had a very handsome daughter approached him.

"Well, Sir Charles," said the Colonel, "your son has got a very handsome wife, but I thought you meant him to marry a black-haired beauty."

"So I did," replied the baronet quietly, "but he showed better taste."

That was one for the Colonel, whose daughter was black-haired, and she was one of the damsels who had been looking at the

heir of Fernleigh with anxious eyes. She thought she had a good chance, for she knew she was dark enough, even to please the baronet.

She came to the ball with the intention of eclipsing this Irish bride, for Miss Bushby knew herself to be the belle of the county, and although she heard rumours of the beauty of Mrs. Langrishe, she thought they were probably exaggerated, so she reached Fernleigh totally unprepared for the vision of loveliness that greeted her on her arrival. Her dark, gipsy face, looked coarse and vulgar beside Maud's fair beauty. At first Miss Bushby was frantic, and wished herself home again, but after a while she got into a better humour, and managed to enjoy herself, although—for the first time in her life, she knew she was not belle of the ball.

Sir Charles was perfectly satisfied with the result of his experiment, he saw for himself that Maud was fairest, even amongst many lovely women, and he retired to rest, happy in knowing that his daughter-in-law was queen of the ball.

A few days later the party at Fernleigh broke up, some of the guests went on to other

county houses, others returned to their homes, while Harold and Gerry started for Italy.

Mr. and Mrs. O'Mahon and Maud considered together, and thought it best to let Gerry go without telling him anything about Eily's unhappiness.

So the travellers started, Harold went with a project to carry out, although it would be bitter pain to him to meet Eily again, and Gerry set out with a light heart and gay spirits.

CHAPTER II.

GERRY wanted to go by slow stages to Italy, but Harold was anxious to push on, however he consented to remain a few days in Paris, and they made a little delay in Florence. Gerry wanted to stay longer, but Harold urged him to proceed, and promised to linger on their return.

When they reached Rome, they drove direct to the Costanzi Hotel, where they expected to find the Martin family.

When refreshed after their journey, they inquired for Mr. and Mrs. Martin, and in reply were told, they had removed that very afternoon to the Quirinal Hotel. As the waiter gave them this information, a peculiar look passed between him and another waiter who was standing near, and who smiled as he turned away. Harold saw the look and the smile, and decided to ask questions later, he did not like to do so in Gerry's presence. The "boy" was all eagerness to see his

sister, so he started off to visit her, he wanted Harold to go also, but he refused.

"Give my compliments to Mrs. Martin," he said, "and tell her I hope to have the pleasure of seeing her to-morrow."

Harold lounged into the salon as soon as Gerry left, and there much to his surprise he found Mrs. Macaire, who was delighted to see him. After some conversation about home, and the people there, Harold inquired—

"Do you know Mr. and Mrs. Martin who have been staying here?"

"I do slightly! do you know them?"

"Yes!" he replied. "I was surprised to find they were gone, I thought to find them here."

"Can you tell me is Mr. Martin mad?" asked Mrs. Macaire in a serious tone of voice.

"My God! what a question! I should say he is as sane as I am."

"Do you know if there is insanity in his family?"

"I know nothing about his family," he answered. "But why do you ask these questions?"

"Because insanity would be the only excuse for his extraordinary behaviour," replied Mrs. Macaire. "If he is not queer in the head, he is the greatest brute that ever lived."

"Why?" demanded Harold, anxiously.

"He treats his lovely young wife most shamefully."

"In what way? Please tell me all! Do you not know that Percy's wife is Mrs. Martin's sister?"

"No! you don't say so!"

"Yes! I feel an interest in Mrs. Martin, their brother is travelling with me, and he is just gone over to the Quirinal to see his sister."

"I hope the gracious monster will be in a better humour than he was when he left here to-day."

"Please tell me everything!" urged Harold.

"Well then!" said Mrs. Macaire, "he is most frightfully jealous without having the slightest cause for being so. If a man looks at his wife he glares at him, and in my presence he spoke most harshly to Mrs. Martin, because she smiled at a waiter who

found a fan, and restored it to her. He does not allow any one to assist his wife into or out of the carriage, he sits beside her always—even I have not spoken a dozen words to her except in his presence—if I had the chance I should have instigated her to rebel. Oh! how I could treat that man!” she cried, and she shook her clenched hand. “Don’t you fancy I should lead him a pretty life?”

“I daresay! but go on—why did they leave here?”

“I was coming to that!” she answered. “At *table d’hôte* Mr. Martin sat between his wife and daughter, which was quite the proper arrangement. At first there was a lady next to Mrs. Martin, but she left, and a fat, ugly, old German came in her place, he was delighted to find that Mrs. Martin spoke German, and got into conversation with her. Mr. Martin looked like thunder, and did his best to interrupt the conversation, but the German was irrepressible. The very instant dinner was over Mr. Martin rose, and of course the ladies also. Next day what do you think he did?”

“What?” inquired Harold, eagerly.

“Put his daughter next the German, thus his wife was guarded on both sides. It was most awkward, everybody wondered at the change of seats. But that is not all!”

“Oh! do go on!”

“Two military men came, a Captain Sanger and his brother. They were placed exactly opposite Mrs. and Miss Martin, the table is a nice width for talking across, and the young men entered into conversation with the ladies opposite, then in the salon they spoke to them again. Mr. Sanger appeared to admire Miss Martin, and sought her society, but as she was always with her step-mother, Mr. Martin unfortunately took it into his head, that his wife was the attraction, and anything to equal his rudeness to Mr. Sanger I never witnessed. The day before yesterday he arrived at the door, just as their carriage drew up. Of course he naturally offered to assist Miss Martin to alight, she got out, in the meantime Mr. Martin got out by the other door, and just as Mr. Sanger was about to help Mrs. Martin, the brute pushed him violently away, and said in a loud voice, he would have no damned red coats philandering after his wife.”

“How unpleasant for his wretched wife!” broke in Harold.

“Indeed you may say so! She went up to her room sobbing violently. Miss Martin followed, looking as white as marble, the monster brought up the rear talking loudly, he said he would take them home, and he would take good care to allow no red coats into his house. On the lobby his daughter turned round suddenly and faced him, she told him he ought to be ashamed of himself, that she hoped he would take them home at once. She poured forth a torrent of abuse, then followed her step-mother into the room, and slammed the door in his face, and he had to slink off looking considerably cowed. If Mrs. Martin had the pluck to rebel also, it would be a good thing!”

“What did Sanger do?” asked Harold.

“He came to my husband, who saw Mr. Martin later, and of course there was an apology.”

“Then what happened?”

“The ladies did not appear again, and they left the hotel to-day. Mr. Sanger told me at dinner, he saw them in the Borghese this afternoon, the ladies both

bowed to him, and he said Mrs. Martin looked very ill."

"Poor girl! she is much to be pitied," said Harold, dejectedly.

"Yes, indeed! but I suppose her brother will interfere, things cannot be worse, and they might be improved, but I doubt if he will get an opportunity of speaking privately to his sister. The brute watches her too closely."

"I am afraid Gerry cannot do much if things are as bad as you say."

"Perhaps Percy and his wife might, if you wrote and told them," suggested Mrs. Macaire, "Mrs. Martin is longing to get home to her people, and that is one reason why the wretch keeps her here. He doesn't care a bit about Rome!"

"Perhaps they will go home soon!"

"I hope so for her sake! Now Harold give me your card, and I'll get you an invitation for the ambassador's ball on Monday—everybody will be there!"

"Are the Martins going?"

"Of course!"

"Can you get Gerry invited also?"

"Yes! I think so. Give me his card too!"

Soon Gerry returned from the Quirinal, looking sad and subdued, he evidently had found things unpleasant. Harold presented him to Mrs. Macaire, but the young fellow was so *distract* that he hardly knew what he was saying.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN Gerry reached the Hotel Quirinal, he inquired for Mrs. Martin. The *portier* looked at him attentively for a minute before replying.

"Monsieur Martin gave orders that they would not receive any visitors," was the man's reply. "He told me to say so, to any one who might call. You'll excuse my telling you sir, please. I only follow the gentleman's directions. See! I can show you what he wrote!"

The *portier* turned into his office, from where he brought out a sheet of note-paper. On it was written in Mr. Martin's well-known back hand—"Mr. and Mrs. Martin will not receive any visitors. Say so, to any one who calls."

Gerry was bewildered, he couldn't understand the meaning of it.

"But Mrs. Martin is my sister!" he said.

"I cannot help you, sir!" replied the *portier*. "I have only acted as I was de-

sired—I suppose the gentleman knew you were coming, and does not wish to see you.”

“He does not know I am in Rome. I only arrived a little while ago—I must see my sister.”

“I cannot help you, sir!” again repeated the *portier*, who at that moment was called away, so Gerry thought he would try some one else and walked on. He met a waiter, but he didn’t know of any one of the name of Martin being in the house, and suggested to Gerry to step into the salon while he inquired. The boy did so, and looked around, there were two or three groups. Suddenly he heard a cry of joy from the further end of the room, “Gerry! Gerry!” and in a second his dearly loved sister was embracing him.

Eily was changed, very much changed, the lovely freshness of girlhood was gone, she looked years older than on her wedding day a few months earlier. She was pale, sad, and subdued, but still most lovely. After that first burst of joy, she became quiet, and almost silent. It was Phœbe who did all the talking, question after question she poured forth, and hardly gave time for a reply. Mr.

Martin sat by looking stern and determined, he seemed to watch his wife's every look, Gerry's every glance; not a word or look escaped him. In the course of conversation Harold's name was mentioned.

"He desired me to give you his compliments, Eily," said Gerry, "and he hopes to see you to-morrow."

"Where?" sternly demanded Mr. Martin.

"Here, of course," replied Gerry.

"You may tell Captain Detmar we do not receive visits from strangers."

"Oh, Stephen! Captain Detmar is not a stranger!" cried Eily, with a gasp.

"He'll be one henceforth! I have given directions to the porter that we will not receive any visitors."

"Yes, indeed!" exclaimed Gerry, "he told me so, and I was very much surprised, and I should like to know the meaning of it."

"Gerry, do you mean to say that you were told we were to receive no visitors?" asked Phoebe, with an angry flash in her eyes.

"Yes! not only was I told so, but I saw your father's written order to that effect."

"Indeed!"

Phoebe rose and hurried out of the room;

for a second Mr. Martin looked as if he were about to follow her, then he glanced at Eily and Gerry, and resumed his seat. The other people had all retired, so they had the room to themselves. In a few minutes Phœbe returned, holding in her hand a sheet of note-paper; she came on quickly towards her father, and she looked just as stern and determined as he did.

“What Gerry said is true! You dared to insult your wife and daughter by giving such an order in a strange hotel. I have explained to the porter, and you better not repeat your offence—I will not stand this any longer, and I will not allow Eily to suffer either. Gerry,” and she turned to the boy, “give our compliments to Captain Detmar, and ask him to come lunch with us to-morrow, and you will come also. Eily, dear, let us retire!” Then, turning to her father, she added—

“A few days ago you had to apologise to a gentleman for your conduct, now an apology is due to your wife and daughter—you will find us in my room. Come along, Eily!”

For a moment Eily seemed in doubt; she looked at her husband, she looked at her brother, who sat speechless with amazement,

then she turned towards Phoebe, who at that moment wore the stern, hard look of her father, and in whose every feature determination and rebellion were depicted. Eily stood up.

Mr. Martin gazed at her in surprise. Was it possible she was going to join his daughter?

Yes, it was quite possible.

At last Phoebe infused a little courage into her, or it may have been that the presence of her brother made her feel bolder. She knew he would be her champion.

"Good-night, dear, dear Gerry! We'll see you and Captain Detmar at lunch to-morrow."

She kissed her brother affectionately, and then seemed as if she were going to speak to her husband, but Phoebe hastily placed her hand on Eily's mouth.

"Not a word to him," she cried, "until he makes an apology. Good-night, Gerry!" and she hurried Eily out of the room.

Phoebe made a stand at last. She and Eily suffered much from Mr. Martin's vile, suspicious temper for some time, and neither ever dreamed of rebelling against him, until a few days previously, when Phoebe in the

heat of passion, gained a courage that surprised herself even. She could not remember half what she said, but she knew her father quailed before her, and she determined from that moment to resist him, when occasion required that she should do so. If Eily would only be courageous and join her, the two would be able to hold their own against Stephen Martin.

He looked after the retreating figures of his wife and daughter, with an ominous frown that meant much.

"If this goes on," he said, "I'll take them home to New Garden."

"I think you would be wise—to do so," said Gerry stiffly, "I am at a loss to understand the meaning of all this."

"All this is easy enough to explain! your sister is my wife, and if I wish her to receive no visitors that is my affair—I don't choose to have any fellows coming after her."

"What do you mean?"

"Just what I say! I had to leave the Costanzi on account of a fellow named Sanger!"

Gerry looked at him in surprise.

"Do I understand you to infer that my sister flirted with this man?"

"She didn't, because I wouldn't let her, but she would if she could."

"I don't believe you!" cried Gerry indignantly.

"I don't care what you believe! but let there be an end of this—you and your friend can come to lunch to-morrow, but let it be understood I'll not have him coming here often—nor indeed, you either!"

"I'll come to see my sister whenever I choose!"

"I repeat again, your sister is my wife. She is mine! and she must and shall obey me. If my daughter does not mind I'll pack her back to school."

An angry rejoinder was on the tip of Gerry's tongue, but he refrained, for the thought struck him that Mr. Martin hardly knew what he was saying. Gerry suspected he had been drinking more than was good for him, so he rose to go.

"You can come to-morrow, as they asked you, but afterwards you must wait for my invitation," said Mr. Martin in a sullen tone.

Gerry departed sorely vexed, and much disturbed. If such scenes occurred often, how wretched his sister's life must be, and if

his suspicion about Mr. Martin were correct, there was little prospect of peace or happiness. He walked up and down for a long time considering what he should do; at first he thought he would not tell Harold, but afterwards he came to the conclusion, it was best to make a clean breast of it, and tell him everything. When he found his friend with Mrs. Macaire, of course he was silent, but as soon as she retired he told him all, and wound up his tale by asking—

“Will you go lunch there to-morrow?”

“By all means!” Harold replied. “If we play our cards well, Martin will take his wife and daughter home, and there they will be much better off than here. Your sister will have her people near her. Poor girl! I pity her!”

Gerry hardly slept that night; he was miserable about his sister, he wondered again and again how she could have married Stephen Martin. What could have induced her to accept him? He little knew how much he was the gainer by the marriage; he never dreamed that Wild Park was free of the debt that had been eating up the property by degrees.

Harold slept not at all, he tossed about from side to side, but found no rest.

His sorrow at Eily's unhappiness was intense; he loved her still, but much as he loved her, he would have been glad to know that she was at least happy. It was agony to him to learn the truth, and then he thought of what might have been.

Oh! the what-might-have-beens! how sad to look back and mourn over them! There are few things sadder in life. Harold mourned over the fate of his love—his love—nay, not his—they were parted for ever.

CHAPTER IV.

Oh, it is excellent
To have a giant's strength ; but it is tyrannous
To use it like a giant.

WHEN Gerry left the Quirinal Mr. Martin remained buried in thought for a long time ; the stern, determined look on his face gave place to one of sadness and disappointment, and frequently he heaved a deep sigh, which almost amounted to a groan. His marriage had not turned out according to his expectations. When he married Eily he knew there was no question of love on her part, at least, he knew she liked him as a friend, and he hoped that in time the feeling of friendship might ripen into love. But his hopes were not destined to be fulfilled.

What might have been, if he acted differently, it is useless to guess, but from the moment of his marriage he adopted measures which he thought should draw his wife's heart nearer to him, but which in the end only served to alienate her more and more every day.

He thought by keeping close to her always, in time he should gain her affections, but after a little while his constant presence worried Eily; it irritated her to have him always beside her, she felt that he kept a never-ceasing espionage on her every look and action, and she fancied he knew even her very thoughts. Hardly a minute of the day could she call her own. If she read, he wanted her to read aloud to him, so after a while she never took a book in her hand; if she sang, he asked her to sing the songs he liked; if she and Phœbe sat together, he came and joined them; if she went to Phœbe's room he followed her there; and, worst of all, he couldn't bear the sight of the pug.

One day, at Bellaggio, in a fit of jealousy against the poor little doggie, which Eily was caressing, he caught hold of Puck and flung him into the lake. The next instant he was horrified at seeing his wife rush into the water after her favourite. Doubtless Puggie would have reached land safely without his mistress's help, but she didn't think of that, and, without a moment's hesitation, went to the rescue of her pet.

From that day Eily began to dislike her husband, she looked on him as her tyrant.

Her only consolation was Phœbe's love, but they could hardly ever converse together.

Mr. Martin kept always near them, and as he noticed the looks of affection that passed between them, he turned against his daughter. He was jealous that his wife should love her, and he longed for some excuse to send her away, so that he might have Eily altogether to himself.

Phœbe was very much afraid of her father; she had no reason to love him, and she didn't; her one feeling for him was fear. She dreaded the stern glance he would sometimes throw at her; she knew she did nothing wrong, yet when he looked at her she felt like a culprit. Of course she yielded implicit obedience to his every whim, for she would not dare to thwart him, and she and Eily were dragged hither and thither according to his pleasure. As soon as they got on speaking terms with any of the people in the hotel at which they were staying, he hurried them off somewhere else. They used to pass little private notes, and in this way console each other. Often and often Phœbe implored

Eily to rebel against her husband's tyranny, but she had not the spirit to do it.

She could not write to her people to tell of her unhappiness, for Mr. Martin watched her too closely, and every letter she received he insisted on reading.

Things went on from bad to worse, and at last Phœbe rebelled. She never knew how she did it, or what gave her the courage, but on the impulse of the moment she spoke out, and said such bitter words that her father quailed before her. She told him that she heard he had worried his first wife, her mother, into an early grave, and that she would avenge her mother's death by watching over her young step-mother, and that she would not allow him to commit a second murder; for some people thought that her mother should have been still alive but for his conduct.

She said much that was true, and her father quailed before her; and Phœbe knew she had gained a victory.

That all happened at the Costanzi Hotel, and now again she defied his authority, and at last Eily showed an impulse of resistance.

Mr. Martin sat thinking for a long time,

but he felt he could not possibly invent any excuse for sending Phœbe back to school. He didn't know what to do about her, and he knew she would only tend to widen the breach between him and his wife, in consequence of her love for, and influence over, Eily.

At last he came to the conclusion that he would return home. There, at all events, he could be master, and if Phœbe became troublesome he would get a stern governess to keep her in order. He would tell her so at once, and he went up to his daughter's room, but he soon forgot his purpose, for he found his wife in a half-fainting, hysterical state, and it was a considerable time before she recovered.

The doctor for whom Phœbe had sent said that Mrs. Martin should be kept very quiet, and that she must not on any account be worried or agitated in any way. Before leaving he spoke a few private words to Mr. Martin.

"Is there consumption in your wife's family?" he asked.

The mere question startled him, for he knew what it meant.

When a doctor makes such an inquiry there is grave cause for alarm.

Next morning Eily was better, but she felt weak, and said she thought she should not be able to go down to lunch, so told Phœbe to write to Gerry and ask him and Captain Detmar to come to dinner instead, as she would be able to go downstairs in the evening.

Mr. Martin did not like the change, the coming to dinner entailed spending the evening, but he said nothing. He remembered the doctor's warning, and he remembered his first wife, and how she died.

Many a woman is worried into her grave!

"Care can kill a cat," and worry can kill a woman!

Phœbe wrote the note to Gerry, Mr. Martin was present, and longed to see what she said, but his daughter did not give him the chance, for she took it herself to a messenger. There was nothing in it that he might not have seen, but his guilty conscience made him feel that Phœbe wrote something against him. She merely said that Eily had

a head-ache, and could not go downstairs until evening.

Harold and Gerry arrived some little time before the dinner hour.

Phœbe was in the salon ready to receive them, and soon Mr. Martin and his wife entered. Harold was grieved and shocked at Eily's altered appearance, she was lovely still, but her beauty was changed, she looked fragile and ethereal. They did not dine at the general table, but sat at a round one apart. Mr. Martin placed a guest at either hand, Eily sat next Gerry, and Phœbe between her and Harold. It had taken long consideration on Mr. Martin's part to arrange the party, he did not want his wife to sit next Harold. If any one had asked him why, he would not have been able to give a satisfactory answer, for he would hardly like to say what was in his mind. He suspected that Harold liked Eily, but he had no idea that she ever cared for him. On the contrary he thought that she fancied Percy, and that one of her reasons for accepting him, was pique at the young man's desertion of her for her sister.

Mr. Martin was quiet, he kept a close watch on every word and look ; his wife knew she was watched, and hardly joined in the conversation.

"Have you been to Tivoli and Frascati yet, Mrs. Martin ?" asked Harold.

"No ! we have not been anywhere outside of Rome."

"You really must see Hadrian's Villa and the Sybil's grotto at Tivoli."

"I should like to very much," replied Eily.

"We'll make a party, and go some day next week," said Harold. "I am sure the Macaires would join us."

Mr. Martin frowned. His daughter caught a glimpse of his face.

"That will be delightful !" said Phoebe. "we must go to Frascati also !"

Mr. Martin frowned again, and muttered some words inaudibly.

"Did you speak, papa ?"

"No ! not exactly !" was the gruff reply.

"I thought you did speak !"

"Perhaps I gave utterance to my thoughts. I don't think Eily could bear the fatigue of such expeditions."

"To be sure she can!" rejoined Phœbe. "We really must go to Tivoli, it would be ridiculous to leave Rome without going there. Don't you think so, Eily?"

"Yes!" she replied timidly.

"Captain Detmar you will arrange about the party for some day next week, about Wednesday or Thursday."

"Very well, Miss Martin! I hope we may have a fine day."

Mr. Martin looked like thunder, and Phœbe felt that her father would manage somehow, that there should be no party, or at all events that she and Eily should not go to it.

Harold had taken a box for the opera the following night, and invited the Martins to accompany him and Gerry. Phœbe instantly replied in acceptance, without giving either her father or step-mother time to speak. Eily looked at her in amazement, she would not have dared to say yes, without consulting her husband, who felt bewildered at his daughter's audacity. A little while before, Phœbe would not have dared to join, or say she would join in any plan, without first asking her father's permission, now she not

only dared to speak for herself, but she also replied for Mr. and Mrs. Martin.

"Eily and I have been longing to see Aida," she said, "they say Singer excels in that *rôle*, so it is quite delightful to have a chance of going to-morrow night. We heard every seat was taken, so you were lucky to get a box, and I'm sure we're awfully obliged to you for asking us to go."

Eily looked timidly at her husband, and then ventured to say—

"You are very kind, Captain Detmar!"

Mr. Martin would have liked to prevent the opera expedition, but he couldn't well see how to do it, but he determined there should be no Tivoli or Frascati, for Eily at all events. His daughter might go if Mrs. Macaire went, but his wife should stay with him.

Good-nights were said early, and it was arranged the Martins should call for Gerry and Harold the following night on their way to the opera.

CHAPTER V.

MR. MARTIN didn't like the turn affairs had taken lately. Phœbe assumed an air of independence that alarmed him, she had immense influence over her young step-mother, and if they combined together, and acted in concert, he feared he should lose the power to control their movements. He was very much exercised in his mind as to what he ought to do.

The arrival of Gerry and Harold was very provoking, and he wished they would go away. He thought he should take himself and his belongings off to Naples, but then in all probability, the two young men would follow them there. They were sure to visit Naples of course. What was he to do?

He felt that the presence of Gerry gave Eily a certain, confident manner, she took things for granted without asking her husband's permission, and he knew that if he did not do something at once, that he should lose his hold over her. He always intended

to keep his wife's people at a distance, and that was one of his reasons for carrying her off abroad, but Maud, whose influence he dreaded most, was no longer in Ireland, therefore he thought it would be best to move homewards. Still he didn't want to do anything in a hurry.

However, about one thing he was determined, that was, that come what might, his wife should go to no excursions to Tivoli or elsewhere. The opera expedition should be the last of its kind.

He could not very well prevent Gerry's coming to see his sister, but Captain Detmar was a stranger, and should be treated as a stranger.

Mr. Martin didn't want to leave Rome, but he was afraid to remain, if Gerry and his friend were going to make a long stay, and he was anxious to find out their intentions. With dismay, he heard they had no plans, at least Gerry had none, and Captain Detmar said he should remain as long as he found Rome pleasant. That might be an indefinite time.

The opera expedition passed off without incident.

Mr. Martin was surly—very surly. He sat just behind his wife's chair, he spoke not a single word, but he watched, listened, and suspected.

He watched, and he saw a bright flush suffuse his wife's cheek when she met Harold. He listened to every word they said, but he heard nothing that all Rome might not hear. They spoke of Fernleigh, of Maud, of Percy, of the baronet, of a hundred things, but nothing was said that could arouse his suspicions. Still he suspected that Harold's visit to Rome was not merely accidental. He had some ulterior object in coming, but what that object was Mr. Martin could not guess. A trifling remark of Gerry's aroused his suspicions; the "boy" said that the trip was decided on in a hurry; they started immediately, and came to Rome almost direct with a rush. He could not get Harold to delay on the way.

Mr. Martin's suspicions made him miserable. He fancied perhaps his wife had written to her people, but still he thought he watched her too well for that, and if she had complained her father would have come.

He knew his wife was not happy, and he

was angry with her for not being so. If she wished for a thing a look got it for her; if spending money could have made her happy, Mr. Martin would have given her cheques without limit, but she cared for nothing, she took no interest in anything.

Since Gerry's arrival she seemed more alive to things around, and it was agony to Mr. Martin to see her loving smiles as she looked at her brother. And she smiled on Harold, too, and her husband hated the world when he saw his young wife had smiles for all but him.

He began to think he never could win her love.

Phœbe and Gerry sat together in a corner of the box, and they whispered and chatted away the whole time, even the solo singers got scant attention from them. Harold sat close to Eily, Mr. Martin directly behind her, his arm resting on the back of her chair. He did not speak, but he listened.

"I am very sorry you are not going to the ball," said Eily.

"So am I, but we were too late to get invitations."

Mr. Martin knew the ball referred to,

he was glad to hear Harold was not going, for he was feeling the pangs of jealousy. If Harold said he was going, Mr. Martin would have made an excuse at the last moment, and would have kept his wife and daughter at home. He liked taking Eily to a crowded *salon*, he liked to see her admired, he liked her to create a sensation, and he liked to stay beside her. They had been to several receptions, but as yet they had not been to a ball. When the invitations arrived, he said to his wife that if they went he expected she would not value. He considered that young wives of elderly men should observe a certain decorum, that it did not look well to see them flying round the room with any strange man.

To this Eily replied she did not wish to dance at all, even quadrilles.

When Harold and Gerry reached home, they found invitations for the ball awaiting them. Mrs. Macaire had kept her word.

"Look here, Detmar!" said Gerry. "If we should see the Martins to-morrow, don't say anything about being invited. It will be jolly to give them a surprise."

"No, I'll say nothing."

This was just what Harold wished. He wanted to see the bright flush of pleasure come into Eily's face when she saw him unexpectedly. He knew it would come, and he wanted to see it, and he wanted to have one more valse with her. It was a miserable happiness to be near her, to see her, to hear her voice. He knew he should regret all this later, but of the future he never thought, he only lived in the passing hour. He knew she was not happy, and now he could scarcely wish her to be so. Her happiness would mean forgetfulness of him.

The ambassador's ball was to be a very brilliant entertainment, the *beau monde* of Rome would be there.

Harold and Gerry went early. The *salons* were only beginning to fill when they arrived. They strolled about for a while, and then went back to the reception room.

At the further end Eily was standing talking to a lady; her husband faced her.

How beautiful she looked! There was no one there to compare with her; she was by far the loveliest woman in the room.

Suddenly a glad light beamed in her eyes, a bright flush suffused her cheek.

Mr. Martin saw the joy in her face, and turned to see who caused his wife's emotion.

Harold Detmar approached them.

"I thought you were not coming," growled Mr. Martin.

"Mrs. Macaire was good enough to get us invited," answered Harold quietly. "May I have the pleasure of a dance, Mrs. Martin?"

"I am so sorry, Captain Detmar, but there are only four quadrilles, and I am engaged for all of them. My husband does not wish me to valse."

"But surely with an old friend?"

"I am very sorry," said Eily, and then she looked at Mr. Martin. She thought perhaps he might say, "You can dance once," but he did not.

He was thinking of the bright light that beamed in her eyes a few minutes before.

"Then if you cannot give me a dance, will you let me take you to supper?" asked Harold, who was much disappointed about the valse.

"With pleasure," responded Eily.

Mr. Martin did not like the arrangement, but he determined to keep close to his wife.

The first quadrille she danced with an Italian prince, the second with Captain Sanger.

Mr. Martin looked on scowling.

The third quadrille he was her partner, and immediately after it Harold claimed Eily to accompany him to supper.

Mr. Martin followed them closely, but at the door of the supper-room he was stopped; he was told he could not enter yet. He wanted to push his way in, but the man was firm and polite. No gentleman who was not accompanied by a lady could be allowed in for the next half-hour. Immediately he hurried back to the ball-room to look for Phœbe, but his daughter was not visible, she was not to be seen. He saw a lady he knew, but if he asked her to go with him he should be obliged to attend to her wants, still as Phœbe was not to be found he asked Mrs. Barber to accompany him to supper. They soon reached the room. It was very crowded but he caught a glimpse of Eily at the far end. He could not get near her, but he would stay near the door, and he would join her when she was leaving the room. Then he attended to Mrs. Barber's wants and also to his own, all the time keeping a close eye

on the door. It never struck him that many came in, but no one went out.

At last he looked down the room. There was no sign of his wife, and then he saw there was an exit at the other end; all went out by a door there.

He wanted to be off at once, but Mrs. Barber was not ready to go. She was playing with some grapes, and, with the perversity of woman, she delayed because she saw Mr. Martin was impatient to leave.

He was pretty nearly in a rage, when she at last drew on her gloves.

As they neared the ball-room, the sounds of a valse greeted their ears. The melodious strains of the "Blue Danube" came floating past them. There were only a few dancing, and it was easy to discern who they were.

Mr. Martin recognised three couples instantly: Mrs. Macaire was dancing with Captain Sanger, Phoebe with Gerry, and his wife with Captain Detmar.

At first he could hardly believe his eyes, but Eily passed him like a flash. She saw him, she looked at him, she did not stop.

"Allow me to take you to your seat," said Mr. Martin gruffly to his partner.

"Thanks," replied Mrs. Barber. "I prefer to stay here a little while. I want to see the dancing."

"Excuse me, then," he said, and he left her.

Harold and Eily paused to take a short rest.

Mr. Martin approached, but Harold saw him coming. He put his arm round Eily's waist, and they were off again.

If a look could have killed him, Harold would never have gone a second time round the room.

They stopped again, and inadvertently, quite close to Mr. Martin.

In a second he swooped down upon them, and made a grasp at his wife's hand that rested on Harold's arm.

"I thought I told you not to dance!"

"You said you objected to my dancing with strange men. Captain Detmar is an old friend. It is not fair to treat me like a child, and I won't"—

"Come along, Phœbe! Come instantly!" he almost shouted to his daughter.

Phœbe paused, and looked a little frightened.

"Oh! Won't you finish this dance, Eily? Don't go yet!"

"She shan't dance!" cried Mr. Martin, who was white with rage.

"I must go," said Phœbe in a whisper to her partner.

Mr. Martin hurried, nay, almost dragged his wife along. Phœbe followed, and with her Gerry and Harold.

In the cloak-room there was a delay about getting the wraps, and when they were forthcoming Harold took Eily's mantle with the intention of assisting her to put it on; but Mr. Martin interposed, and almost snatched it out of his hand.

There was silence during the drive home; but when they reached their rooms there was another scene between Phœbe and her father.

His anger had cooled down during the drive and her temper had risen.

Once again Mr. Martin quailed before his daughter.

She made him apologise to his wife.

CHAPTER VI.

Deux yeux voyent plus clair qu' un.

Of course many comments were made about Mr. Martin's conduct at the ball, and of course, as usual, rumour with her hundred tongues altered and exaggerated the facts of the case, and the story was enlarged, twisted, and tortured out of all recognition. Nothing true remained but the names.

"Did you hear about it, *cara mia*?" said one lovely dame to another. "He was her lover, and she was going to elope with him from the ball. Mr. Martin discovered the plan by the merest chance, and rushed up to see if she were gone and found them dancing."

"Yes! I saw him. He rushed at them, dragged her away from her lover, and struck him."

"Of course they'll meet!" said fair dame number one.

“Not they !” replied her friend. “There’ll be an apology ! That is all the English ever do !”

“How unlucky for the lovers that they were caught ! If they had not waited for the dance they could have got off all right ; but the ‘Blue Danube’ is such a seductive valse !” said fair dame number one with a little sigh.

“Yes !” softly murmured her friend with another sigh.

The name of this valse evidently brought back fond memory to these fair Roman women, for they spoke no more for a time. Their thoughts were busy with the remembrance of other balls, and with the memory of a love dream. Presently another lovely Roman dame entered, and then the three chatted again about the event of the previous night. Her version was completely different, and still far from the truth.

“You are both completely wrong !” she said. “He was not her lover—never saw her before in his life—they met for the first time last night ; but the fact was Mr. Martin took too much champagne, and consequently he saw double, and he thought this *Signor*

Capitano was somebody else. He made a handsome apology in the cloak-room."

"Oh, indeed!" exclaimed her listeners.
 "Then there is a somebody else!"

"It appears so!" was the reply.

"I hardly thought he was her lover!" said fair dame number one.

"Why?" asked her friend.

"Because she is too young yet, and too simple!"

"She is afraid of her very life of her husband," remarked number two.

"She'll get better after a while," said the third. "Depend upon it she'll manage to amuse herself yet!"

"She'll never amuse herself!" declared the first. "Her heart is dead!"

The Roman dame's verdict was pretty nearly true. Eily's heart was dead.

She often wondered at herself. Could she be the same Eily who was presented at Dublin Castle just a year ago? Was she the same Eily who wore a wreath of roses at her first ball?

When she looked back and thought of that time she felt she was changed. She could hardly believe she was the same. So

much had happened in that short year; but to her it seemed an eternity. She could scarcely think that it was only twelve months since she first met Harold—so much had occurred since. She gave him her heart, and alas! Fate, cruel, cruel Fate compelled her to give her hand to another. If all the months were to drag themselves along as slowly as these few months of her married life how could she ever wait for the end? Poor Eily's one hope, one wish, one prayer was for an early grave.

Harold and Gerry went home from the ball in silence. Harold was thinking of his love. How easily he induced her to disobey her husband's commands. She only hesitated for a second, and he thought he could induce her to forget all for his sake. But perish the thought. Dishonour must never be her portion, shame must never cast its shadow on the name of Percy's sister!

But this one short evening taught him two things. He was not as strong as he thought, and he had power over her!

It was more than ever urgent that miles of land and ocean should divide them. Nothing else would do. He must shun

temptation for her sake. There must be no risk.

If Mr. Martin would only take his wife and daughter home to the quiet haven of New Garden he should be content, and he would seek a foreign clime, for he felt and knew that it was dangerous for him and Eily to meet. That short valse awakened all the passion in his heart, and he knew for Eily's sake he must not meet her. The temptation might be too strong for them.

Gerry was silent too. He was thinking of his sister, and wondering did Martin take too much champagne. Nothing else could excuse his conduct, and even such a plea could hardly palliate it. He made a public exhibition of his wife, and Gerry remembered, with shame, how some of the fair dames tittered behind their fans, and how they looked at Eily, and how they stared at Harold.

It was a very painful scene altogether, and Gerry determined he would seek an explanation the next day from Mr. Martin. He thought an apology was due to Harold from that gentleman.

Next morning at a late breakfast Gerry spoke what was in his mind—

“I am going over to the Quirinal,” he said. “I am going to ask Martin what he meant by his conduct last night, and I’ll tell him you require an apology.”

“Never mind me, Gerry! But I think he owes his wife some reparation. I suppose he hardly was aware that he made her the laughing-stock of the room. Of course that concerns him more than me. An *esclandre* of that kind never hurts a man, but I dread to think what may be said of your sister. Just put it to him in that light. He would hardly like to have his wife talked about. The best plan would be that we should be seen together; but to that I am sure he would not consent. We ought to go to the opera to-night.”

“I believe he didn’t know what he was doing. He must have taken too much!”

“Nothing of the kind!” declared Harold emphatically. “He was as sober as a judge. It was all his vile temper. I’ll see Mrs. Macaire and learn what was said. Be firm with him, Gerry; but don’t think of me, and oh, by-the-by, ask about going to Tivoli.”

Gerry went to the Quirinal and was ushered into the Martins' private sitting-room. Eily was engaged in knitting, Phœbe was doing nothing, and Mr. Martin looked sullen.

There was evidently a storm in the air. Gerry saw that at a glance, and wondered if it were over or yet to come. He approached his sister, stooped and kissed her.

"Look here, young man!" shouted Mr. Martin, "I won't have this sort of thing!"

"What sort of thing?" asked Gerry.

"I won't have you coming here smirking every minute of the day kissing and hugging my wife!"

"You mean my sister!"

"I mean my wife! I won't have this kissing every time you meet. I'll not permit it!"

Eily stood up. She was close to her brother, who turned white with anger.

"I kissed my sister before I ever saw you, and I'll kiss her when and where I like without asking your permission." And he turned and again embraced his sister tenderly.

"My darling! I am sorry for you!" he

said, "but we must interfere. We will not have your life spoiled."

Eily turned from him with a stifled sob.

Then Gerry faced Mr. Martin, and that gentleman was surprised to see the "boy" look at him with indignation and defiance depicted in his face.

"Now, sir!" he said, "I demand an explanation of your conduct last night."

"There is none required, and if there were it is not likely that I should explain to you."

"Pardon, Mr. Martin, I require an explanation for your strange behaviour to *my* sister and *my* friend."

"I told *my* wife she was not to dance with strangers."

"Captain Detmar is not a stranger!" sobbed poor Eily.

"I choose to consider him such," replied her husband.

"Even if he were a stranger there is no excuse for your conduct," said Gerry.

"My wife disobeyed my commands!"

"You insulted my sister publicly, and I require that full reparation is made to her."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Mr. Martin, with what might be called a satanic chuckle.

"I insist on it! Pray are you aware what was said in the room last night after your departure?"

Mr. Martin looked serious. He was a slave to Dame Gossip. He couldn't bear to be talked about, and he couldn't bear that his wife should be talked about.

"They daren't say anything! I had a perfect right to take my wife away if I chose!"

"You had! But you had no right to make an exhibition of my sister, and I insist on a reparation."

"What was said last night, Gerry?" asked Eily.

"I'll not insult you, by repeating what was said of you, but other people thought your husband was drunk, and they excused his conduct on that plea."

"Let them think my father was drunk," said Phoebe. "Let anything be said of him, but let no blame be cast on Eily!"

"None shall!" was Gerry's response.

"It does not matter much," growled Mr. Martin. "We leave Rome to-morrow night."

Gerry's heart leaped with joy, as he asked—

“Where are you going?”

“Home! direct from Rome to Paris!”

“All right Mr. Martin! but my sister shall not leave Rome until a proper *amende* is made by you.”

“I told her I was sorry!” doggedly muttered Mr. Martin.

“That is not enough! I'll not let her go, and leave people a chance of slandering her. There would be no end to the talk if you carried her off like that.”

“I mean to go to-morrow night!”

“I don't care whether you go or not, but Eily shall not go without my consent!”

“Oh! Gerry,” she murmured.

“Be silent, Eily! This is no affair of yours—your husband will find that your brother, young as he is, is able to protect you!”

“This is all very fine talk!” said Mr. Martin, “but I want to know what you are driving at!”

“Last night you insulted my sister by roughly catching hold of her, and dragging her away from her partner, who was my

friend. The lookers-on thought there must be some reason for your conduct, and will think so more than ever, if you leave Rome suddenly, therefore their gossip must be put a stop to ! ”

“ How ? ” inquired Mr. Martin.

“ My sister and my friend must be seen in public together.”

Mr. Martin looked at him in silence for a second.

“ Suppose I refuse to allow her to leave this hotel until we start for Paris, what will you do ? ”

“ If you refuse, I’ll telegraph instantly to my father to come here at once, and pending his arrival I shall prevent my sister leaving here. Mark my words, Stephen Martin, my sister shall and must be seen with my friend before she leaves Rome.”

“ You are quite right, Gerry ! ” exclaimed Phœbe.

“ Silence ! ” thundered her father.

“ I won’t be silent ! Gerry is quite right in insisting on Eily’s being seen with Captain Detmar—people will then believe that you *were* drunk—and it is best they should think so.”

"Am I to telegraph for my father or not?" asked Gerry, calmly.

Mr. Martin paused for a second, it would not suit him for his father-in-law to be summoned to Rome, and he saw that Gerry was very much in earnest.

"What do you propose?" he asked.

"We must go to the opera to-night! Perhaps it would be as well for you to come, although you needn't if you don't choose."

There was silence. Eily was astonished at Gerry's audacity in dictating to her husband.

"Am I to telegraph or not?" asked Gerry after a while.

"No! you needn't—we can all go to the opera, and to-morrow night we start for home."

"You can go when you like, after Eily and Detmar have been seen together, but now comes the difficulty about him!"

"What difficulty?" inquired Mr. Martin.

"It is hardly likely he will consent to meet you, unless you apologize, so if you mean to come to-night you had better write a note."

Mr. Martin felt indignant, it was bitter for

him to have to submit to the dictation of his brother-in-law, but he knew that Gerry was right, that nothing would stop the wagging of tongues so well as the plan proposed—but how could he apologize? it was bitter as gall the mere idea, but already he was obliged to eat humble-pie, and a little more or less made no matter, so after some grumbling and muttering to himself, he sat down and wrote a short note.

Gerry immediately took his departure, he was triumphant, he had humbled his brother-in-law to the very dust. The note to Harold was satisfactory, he didn't care a straw one way or the other, and would have gone to the opera in any case.

As arranged, Gerry called for the Martin family, and Harold met them at the door of the theatre. Eily had dressed herself superbly, she knew what Gerry wished, she knew she went to the opera—not to hear the music, or to see the *mise en scène*—she went to be seen.

Very lovely she looked, as she took her place, and in a few minutes every opera glass in the house was levelled at their box, and then people talked.

“ Look ! that is the *Capitano* ! ” said one.

“ Of course the stories can't be true ! ” said another. “ Mr. Martin would never be seen with him ! ”

“ It was all a mistake ! ” said a third.

“ Too much champagne, and of course this is meant as a public apology ! ”

And so ran the comments.

The world and his wife looked on and they saw Mr. Martin and Captain Detmar speak to each other. All looked as it should, the affair of last night was all a mistake.

Next day P.P.C. cards were sent by the Martins to their acquaintances, and that night they quitted Rome. Gerry went to see his sister off, but Harold did not. He bade her a whispered good-bye as they were leaving the opera. He remembered with pain the look of mute agony there was in her eyes, as she echoed his words and murmured—

“ Good-bye for ever ! ”

CHAPTER VII.

THE Martins reached Paris safely, and they remained there a short time. The nearer they got to home, the more anxious Mr. Martin became to please his wife and daughter, and they were both much astonished at the change in him. It seemed as if his encounter with Gerry had brought him to his senses, at all events the demon of jealousy no longer tormented him, and therefore he no longer worried his wife. One day she asked him, might she write to Maud.

"I should so much like to see my sister," she said. "May I write and ask her to meet us in London?"

For a moment he hesitated, he knew Maud was able to influence every one with whom she came in contact, and he knew she had immense power over her sister; she could sway her in everything. Maud could bend Eily's will, as easily as he could break a twig, not indeed that Eily had much will, for she was too easily influenced, she was always ready to give in to any one.

Eily saw that he hesitated.

"Please let me write, Stephen ! you may rely on me—I will—be—silent !"

He looked at his wife, but she turned her face aside, she did not wish to meet his eye, she feared that she had said an imprudent thing, she thought she was wrong in offering silence as a bribe.

"If I could be sure, that you would not complain, I should not mind your writing to her."

"Oh ! Stephen, I shall be silent, indeed ! I shall."

"Then you may write."

"Thanks ! a thousand thanks !" She smiled brightly at her husband, as she turned to her desk, and hastily scribbled off a short note. When it was finished she handed it to him, but he did not read it, he folded it, and put it in an envelope and gave it to her to address. Eily wondered at his doing so, for hitherto he had read every letter she wrote, except the one that she sent secretly to her mother.

"Eily !" he said, "why cannot you be happy ?"

She hung her head in silence, she could

not tell him that there never could be happiness for her.

“You know I want you to be happy!” continued her husband. “If you wish or want for anything you have only to say so! Is there anything you wish for?”

Still Eily was silent.

“Money is at your command; you can buy what you like. I wish you to indulge your every whim.”

“I do not care about money,” she said at last. “It cannot buy what I should prize most.”

“What is that?”

“Liberty!”

That one word struck home to Stephen Martin’s heart; it pierced him like a dagger. He loved, passionately loved, this fair young wife of his, and all she wished for was liberty! He thought she meant freedom from her marriage vows; she did not, but he thought she did. At that one word he understood, and he saw the truth in all its ugly, bare nakedness. They were tied together until death should part them. He loved his wife, and he knew she had no love for him.

Mutual apathy would have been better, far

better; if both were indifferent to each other they might have rubbed along somehow. Many a Darby and Joan get on through life with just a little liking on both sides, and many others manage to get along with indifference, and still do their duty to each other; but when love exists in the heart of one only, there can be little peace or happiness for that couple.

Stephen Martin loved his wife—she had no love for him, she disliked him—she feared him as her tyrant. He did not know that such were her feelings towards him, but now he knew that she wished for liberty.

At last he saw the mistake his marriage had been. With a groan he said—

“I cannot give you back your liberty.”

“Stay, Stephen,” she cried, “you misunderstand me. I did not wish for liberty in the sense you mean—I did not think of that. Has it never struck you that I must look on you as my jailer? Am I not like yonder bird? he cannot get out unless I open the door of his cage and give him his freedom for a short half-hour. How he enjoys it, and yet he comes back obedient to my call, and returns to his cage. Often and often I have

envied my bird. You cannot know how galling it is to me to be watched always—to know that your eye is ever fixed on me—it irritates me, it makes me long for impossible things. You tell me to spend gold—you are always telling me to lavish money. I care nothing for *chiffons*, but I long for liberty! Oh! Stephen, cannot you do, as I do, towards my bird—give me as I give him—a little freedom now and then!”

Stephen Martin looked surprised; his young wife never complained before, and how bitter it was to him to learn that his presence was irksome to her. He loved her with an all-absorbing passion, and he could not bear to let her out of his sight, and he knew now that she wished to escape from his society.

“Stephen, look!” she continued, “let me have some liberty—let me be as other women—let me come and go at my own pleasure—do not follow me always—do not watch me always! Let me sometimes know the sweets of freedom—let me feel that I am not a prisoner—let me think you—something better—than—my—jailer!”

Her voice quivered with emotion as she

poured forth her petition, and she finished with a sob.

“Let me think you something better than my jailer !”

This was the prayer of the fair, young wife, to the stern husband who loved her so well, that he wanted to be ever beside her. He was her jailer, he knew she spoke truly, and he wondered had he been wrong in not trusting her more, in not allowing her to please herself.

“If I told you that you might do as you pleased, what would you do to-day ?”

A bright flush deepened her pale cheeks, and the lovely light that had been so long absent beamed in her eyes.

“I could not tell what I might do or where I might go,” she answered, “besides it would hardly be liberty if I had to tell beforehand. When I let my bird out of his cage I do not ask him to remain in one spot, I let him go and enjoy himself !”

“Go, Eily ! go enjoy yourself—I ask not where. Spend your day as you like !”

His voice was hoarse with emotion as he spoke ; it was bitter pain to him to let her

go from him, but still he wanted her to think him something better than her jailer.

"Do you really mean that I may go alone?"

"Yes! go, take care of yourself!"

"Thanks!" said Eily, "I shall not stay long."

She went towards the door, then turned and looked back at her husband; his head hung dejectedly on his breast. Eily could not guess what bitter pain it was to him to learn that she thought him her jailer. She paused as she opened the door, then she pushed it to and walked quickly back to her husband, and put her hand on his shoulder.

"Stephen!" she cried, "let me out of my cage sometimes, and I shall try to be happy—I shall try to be content!"

She could not say happy, for she knew happiness and she had said good-bye forever! She stooped, pressed a light kiss on her husband's brow, and in an instant was gone.

Stephen Martin looked up as she left the room; he could hardly believe his sense of feeling. Was it possible she kissed him? kissed him of her own accord? "It is a good

beginning," he thought, and then the demon awoke. He longed to follow her, to watch her, to see where she went, to whom she spoke; then he remembered they knew no one in Paris, but the demon whispered, How do you know but that they may have followed from Rome? The idea was torture, and on the instant he resolved to ask how she went out, and if it were known where she went; but no! he would not do so, he would not let her think him a spy.

Then he rang the bell, and desired the servant to ask if Miss Martin would go out with him. In a few minutes the man returned—

"Mademoiselle has gone out with Madame."

Mr. Martin was glad to hear this; after all, Eily did not make a bad use of her first hour of liberty, she did not go alone. Then he too went out, and he wandered along the Boulevards, the gay Boulevards of Paris, where there is always so much life, so much to engross one's attention. After a little while he forgot that his wife thought him her jailer, but he thought of her, and wondered how she was spending her time. He strolled on, and at length found himself in the Palais-

Royal ; he wandered on, pausing now and again to look into a shop window, where the *luze* of the day was displayed. He stopped before one, and was looking at the bright jewels, when a low, musical laugh fell on his ear ; he had not heard it for months, yet he recognised it instantly. He looked beyond the glittering ornaments in the window, into the shop, and there he saw his wife and daughter. There was no one with them, nobody was there save the young man who was attending them. His wife held in her hand a gold box, on the lid stood a bright, jewelled bird, which carolled forth a song of joy. Eily's laugh was at the surprise. When the box was handed to her she saw nothing out of the way, she was told to press a spring, she did so, and the imprisoned songster leaped out, and poured forth a melodious song, and when it ended the bird disappeared into his golden prison.

Stephen Martin watched his wife, again she pressed the spring, and again the songster charmed the ear. Then when the song was finished Eily put down the box and shook her head. Stephen Martin's first impulse was to go in and tell her to buy it, no matter

about its cost, but he remembered in time. If he went she might think he was spying after her; no, she must never think him a spy, it was bad enough to be thought her jailer. He strolled on, but he did not look into any more shop windows, he was thinking that by-and-by he would go back and buy that bird. He guessed that Eily was looking for some present for Maud, they had not as yet given her a wedding gift. The very day previous Mr. Martin suggested to his wife to buy presents for her people, she replied that she did not want to take them anything, they would be glad to see her without any gifts; but now the first use she made of her hour of liberty was to think of her family.

Stephen Martin was well versed in the ways of the world, but he had yet to learn that women, at least most women cannot bear to be hampered by a masculine presence when shopping. Half the pleasure of it is gone, if a man's taste has to be consulted. True, there are some women who like to have their husband's opinion, but they are in the minority, and the wise man never interferes when his womankind go shopping. Of course to most men, it is a bore intolerable to be

dragged into a milliner's, or some such establishment, they show their fatigue, they are listless, indifferent, and in a hurry to be gone, and the woman feels this. When she is let go alone, she pleases herself, she takes her time, she is not fussed, and she never regrets the purchases then made. Mr. Martin as he walked along, ruminated, and remembered how often he heard women say, that a man was a nuisance when they went shopping, and he determined for the future that his wife should go alone, he also remembered that everything bought since their marriage had been selected by him. He knew he had good taste, but still his wife should please herself in future. He strolled on, his mind occupied with his reflections, when suddenly he found himself face to face with Mrs. Fowler and Ella. They said they were charmed to see him, and they certainly seemed pleased. Of course mutual inquiries were made. He told them his wife and daughter were shopping, and they agreed with him, that there was no place like Paris for indulging in such pastime.

Then he learned from them, that Ida and her husband sailed for New Zealand in

November, and Mrs. Fowler sighed and groaned over her darling child's departure. Ella told him that she and her mother had left Dublin for good, she was tired of it, and saw no use in remaining there, and they were on their way to Nice. Mr. Martin did not think of asking her about her friend the jovial militiaman, if he had, she would have said nothing; she would not have told him, that he had been tried, and had been found wanting. Every device, every dodge that woman could think of, to bring a man to a declaration, had been resorted to by Ella, but in vain. She even took possession of a ring of his, and wore it constantly; she hoped he would have asked her to keep it, as a token of their engagement, but he did not do so, instead, he asked her to give it back, and said he meant it for a betrothal ring some day, if he ever married, but up to that period he had not met a girl that he should care to wed. The jovial militiaman was too wary, he was not to be caught, and so ended Ella's acquaintance with her friend. He often spoke afterwards of how she tried to inveigle him, and boasted of his cleverness in escaping the trap laid for him.

Mr. Martin invited Mrs. and Miss Fowler to dinner that day, and they accepted his invitation.

"You know Paris well, Miss Fowler," he said. "Can you tell me where I could get one of those jewelled birds that hop out of a box and sing?"

"Yes! to be sure! there are several shops here."

"Whereabouts?"

"Come a few doors further down, you will find what you want at Fontana's."

Accordingly to Fontana's they went, he did not wish to go back to the other side of the Palais-Royal, he did not want to run the risk of meeting his wife.

They found the jewelled toy he wanted, it was very expensive, but he did not mind about the price, and without asking for the smallest reduction, he said he would take it. Ella was alert at once, she did not approve of such a mode of buying, and told him he ought to have asked for a reduction, before deciding to take it, now it was too late.

"Pardon, Madame," said the shopman, who understood English, "we take off ten per cent. on a purchase of this kind."

Mr. Martin did not want a reduction, but Ella Fowler wanted a ring, and she got one!

When Stephen Martin returned home, he found his wife beaming, she came forward and met him.

"See Stephen!" she said, "I have bought presents for them, and I have been at home, quite a long time."

"Let me see what you have bought."

There was an aneroid barometer, and a silver flask for her father, a brooch for her mother, and a pearl and diamond pendant for her sister.

"I hope I have not spent too much money," said Eily, "but I wanted to get something nice for Maud."

"Not at all! spend as much as you like, but I also have bought something for Maud, and I fancy my present beats yours."

He took out the little golden box, and placed it in his wife's hand.

"You can put the pendant inside. Press that spring."

She touched it, and out flew the imprisoned songster, it was a more lovely bird than the one Eily had seen, and wished to purchase, but the price frightened her. She listened

to the song to the end, and when the warbling ceased, she turned to her husband.

"How good you are!" she said, "that was just the very thing I wished to buy for Maud. Some kind fairy must have put it into your mind to get it."

Again she kissed him. Twice, in one day, she gave him a caress of her own free-will.

Then he told her about the Fowlers, and how they were coming to dinner.

They found Eily much changed, still they saw nothing to lead them to suppose that she was not satisfied with her lot, and more that once that night Ella envied her.

Next day the Fowlers started for the South, the lovely South, with its palms, its aloes, its orange groves, its cloudless sky, its brilliant sun, and the Martins left for London, the city of fogs, of smoke, of gloom, of abject misery, and of prodigal splendour!

CHAPTER VIII.

PERCY and Maud came to London to join the Martins. What a joyful meeting there was between the two sisters, how glad they were to be together once more. A year previous, it would have been difficult to decide which was the elder, indeed people always were in doubt, and often made mistakes, but now, one glance was sufficient for any one to see that Eily was older than Maud. What a contrast between them, and how much they were changed.

Eily was lovely, but she was sad, subdued, silent, careless of herself, and her surroundings. Maud on the other hand appeared more brilliant than ever, a new lustre seemed to have been added to her beauty, happiness beamed in her glorious eyes, happiness sounded in every tone of her voice, one could discern happiness in her every look, her every action.

There was a marked contrast too, between the husbands of these two fair, young women.

Mr. Martin was stern, morose, sullen, his voice did not soften when he addressed his wife, his eyes did not seek hers in loving glances. Percy was just the opposite, he was overflowing with gay spirits, he was just as happy as his wife. Yet a shadow was looming near.

"I am so glad to see you, darling," said Maud. "I was so afraid that at the last moment we should have to send a telegram. Sir Charles has been ailing these last few days."

"I am sorry to hear it!" said Eily, with indifference.

"There is nothing serious the matter, or of course we shouldn't be here," added Percy.

"Yet I feel anxious!" cried Maud. "I almost wanted to stay, but Sir Charles wouldn't hear of such a thing. He is so good to me!"

"Is not every one good to you?" asked Eily.

"Yes! but he is particularly so. I hope he may get better, but I feel very uneasy."

"Nonsense, queenie!" exclaimed her husband. "Now that we are in town we must

make the best use of our time and amuse ourselves.”

They all did manage to enjoy themselves, and Maud and Eily were very happy together. The latter gave her sister the pendant and box, as a joint gift from her and her husband. Eily wanted him to present the box himself, but he did not wish to do so, and begged her to give it, as she did.

Mr. Martin feared his sister-in-law, and disliked her. He knew that she was clever, and he felt that she knew him. To the best of his power he kept the demon of jealousy hidden from her sight. He thought she did not see it, but she did. Clever as he was he could not hide his faults from Maud.

The demon came back in full force when the Martins arrived in London. He was only taking a nap in Paris.

It is bad for a man or woman to be troubled with jealousy when a just cause for such exists. Then one is tormented with a hundred horrid thoughts, a thousand doubts; but all the thoughts and doubts are centred on one object. There is only one pivot on which suspicion turns. But if there is no real cause for jealousy, if there is *no one* to

invest with doubt and suspicion, if instead of one object a number are thought to exist, what a fever the demon creates, and what a wretched life is led! Every moment has its doubt, its conjecture, its fear, and every one is an object of suspicion.

There is little ease for the man or woman who is jealous when a cause exists, but there is no peace where jealousy exists without reason.

Stephen Martin was jealous. He hated to see his wife smile on any one, he hated to hear her speak to any one, he hated to see her look at any one, and he had not a moment's peace. At one minute he was jealous of his own daughter, at another of the dog Puck, and he hated both for the time. The demon had complete sway over him!

When Maud and Percy arrived, the latter kissed Eily, and made some affectionate allusion to their relationship. "My only sister," he called her. There was nothing unseemly in Percy's kissing his sister-in-law, but her husband thought there was, and on the instant the green-eyed monster sparkled angrily in his eyes.

Maud saw that he was jealous. It was only confirmation of what she expected.

Eily uttered no word of complaint to her sister, she promised to be silent, and she was so.

Once Maud asked her to tell her about what happened in Rome.

"We will not speak of it, darling," replied Eily. "I prefer not to think of that time. I am glad we are going home."

"And are you happy?"

"I told you once before that you must be happy for both of us."

"Oh, Eily! My sister! How I wish you were as happy as I am."

"I am glad to know of your happiness," said Eily. "I mean to try and be contented. That is all I ever hope to be."

Then they spoke of other things, for Maud saw that Eily preferred a different topic. She told her of her home, how much she liked Fernleigh, she spoke of Sir Charles, of Lady Langrishe, and then of Mrs. Detmar.

"She is in terrible grief," said Maud. "We find it impossible to console her."

"Why?" asked Eily in surprise.

"Did you not know dear? Harold has made arrangements to exchange, and will soon go to the Cape."

"To Africa! To that dreadful climate!" gasped Eily.

"The climate is not so bad there. But Mrs. Detmar has got it into her head that she'll never see him again. She says she shouldn't mind India half so much."

"Why not?"

"I'm sure I don't know, and I don't believe she could tell herself."

"Why does he not please his mother, and go to India, if he must go away?"

"I know not. He is stubborn, he is determined to go. It was the first chance of an exchange that offered. But even if it were India it would be all the same to his mother. Africa is only an idea with her."

"Oh! why must he go?" cried Eily with an agitated voice. "Why cannot he stay with his mother? I wonder if I were to ask him!"

"I shouldn't do so if I were in your place. There is no use in making your husband jealous. It is best Harold should go."

“ You are right, Maud. It is best that he should go.”

Eily said no more, and there was silence between them. Maud felt that her surmise was correct. She guessed her sister liked Harold, and she thought that as long as he remained and met her occasionally that Eily could never be satisfied with her lot. When he was gone she might be contented. If Maud knew all she would have known how very right she was in saying that it was best he should go.

Eily understood now what he meant by saying “ Good-bye for ever ! ” that night in Rome.

Mr. Martin soon entered the room. He came to say he had decided to leave London the following evening.

This was a great disappointment to both Eily and Maud. The first arrangement was that they were to be a fortnight together, and a week was only just past.

Arguments and entreaties availed not. Stephen Martin was inflexible, he was determined to go.

As it fell out it did not matter in the least. Fate destined that the sisters were to part.

next day, for in the morning a telegram arrived summoning Percy and Maud back to Fernleigh. The baronet was very ill, and the worst was feared.

There was consternation, then flurried preparations, hurried, tearful farewells, and the Langrishes were off.

The same evening the Martins left London for Dublin.

Sir Charles was very ill, and the doctors gave up all hope. He could not pull through again; his weakened constitution was not able for the strain of another illness. He knew his time was come; he knew the Angel of Death was at hand!

"Keep me alive, prop me up somehow until they come," he said. "I want to see them once more."

That was his only wish, he wanted to see his son and his daughter-in-law again. He longed for a sight once more of her blooming beauty, for Maud had completely won her father-in-law's heart, and he often told her of how he planned that his son should marry some dark-haired woman. "But Percy knew better, my dear," he would say; "he was right in choosing you."

Hours went by, anxious hours for all around that sick bed. They were propping up the patient with stimulants and jelly, and they hoped his strength might last, yet they feared it could not, but his will helped them.

"Prop me up," he would say ; "keep me alive until they come."

That was his only entreaty, and he had his wish.

Percy and Maud arrived and found Sir Charles conscious, though very weak.

He knew them, and held a hand of each while he prayed God to bless them and their children through life.

Percy asked his father to forgive him for his past offences, but the baronet interrupted.

"It was all my fault, my son. I did not understand you. I thought you ought to have been like me, but you are a better man."

"Say not so, father. You have always been thought well of."

"All right, Percy. *Sic transit gloria mundi!* I leave all to you, my day is done; I am tired now !"

The old man fell asleep, and gently slumbered while his own looked on. Once or

twice he stirred and opened his eyes. When he did so he smiled on those around, and then slept again. As morning broke he spoke once more.

“That damned sneak will be kept out after all! I am sorry I cannot wait to see Percy’s son.”

Then sleep closed his eyes again, and the hand of slumber never released him, but yielded him up quietly to Death. His spirit passed away in silence and peace. He was gone some minutes before those around realized that the great change had taken place.

Mrs. Detmar was the first to notice that the weary soul was gone to his God. She saw all was over, and she signed to Percy to lead his young wife away.

She went at once, she knew the old man would have wished her to do so, for he often begged her to take care of her health.

The baronet’s death did not surprise any one, it was an event expected for some time, people only wondered how he lasted so long, for his constitution was quite gone for many months. Percy’s marriage propped him up for a time, and then Percy was elected, and

that was another stimulant, and before he died he knew there was hope of an heir to his son, and the knowledge made him very content.

Harold and Gerry were summoned from Rome, and of course Mr. O'Mahon came also. Eily thought her husband ought to go to the funeral, and her father was of the same opinion, but Mr. Martin flatly refused, and saw no necessity for his going, and Mrs. O'Mahon agreed with him. He never guessed her reason for doing so, and thought she merely did it to please him. She was afraid to allow her husband and Mr. Martin to travel together, for something might come out.

The remains of the old baronet were laid with the bones of his ancestors, the last dark Langrishe was left with the many of his line.

Then his successor the young baronet Sir Percy, had to rouse himself; his first duty was to his constituents, so he went up to London, took his seat, and then paired with an Irish member for a few weeks.

Then the Dowager resigned her position to the young wife of her son, and went to live with her sister in Brighton.

Mrs. Detmar badly needed consolation, for the day of Harold's departure was fast drawing near, and the presence of her sister was a great solace to her. Sir Percy and his wife were left alone to begin their reign at Fernleigh.

The weeks went over quickly, and Harold came to say farewell, and with him they went to Brighton. Sir Percy thought that his presence would be a help to his mother, when her sister was bowed down with grief.

Harold went, and his poor mother was heart-broken, there was no consolation possible.

Then Sir Percy was obliged to return to London, and he took his place in the House. He spoke not, but he listened and he voted.

At last a question was mooted, it was a subject he understood thoroughly. He heard a member of the Opposition speak about it, he blundered through a long rigmarole making statements that were far from correct, and then Sir Percy spoke. Every word that had just been said he contradicted, and he was able to show that his view was the right one. He spoke forcibly and well, and more than one statesman noted the new member.

His party knew he was a valuable addition to their side, while the Opposition felt that Sir Percy was a strong opponent.

Maud was enchanted at her husband's success.

"Dearest!" she said, "how proud your father would have been to-day!"

"I am indebted to you for my success, but for you I should never have tried."

"Success has crowned your first effort," replied Maud. "For the future be determined—be strong—and remember—*Forti nihil difficile!*"

CHAPTER IX.

One year ago my path was green,
My footsteps light, my brow serene ;
Alas ! and could it have been so
One year ago ?

WHEN the Martins reached New Garden, the very first news they heard was, that the 16th Regiment had been replaced by the 46th, which was likely to remain some time at Athlone.

Mr. Martin had quite determined to ignore the new-comers, he did not intend to make their acquaintance, but it was impossible for him to follow the plan laid out. Colonel Carter was his own first cousin, they had not met for years, as the Colonel had been on foreign service, but they had kept up a correspondence at distant periods. Then Lieutenant Purcell was the son of his first wife's sister, he was Phœbe's only relation on her mother's side.

Both these officers had been to New Garden, they went to call immediately on their arrival in Athlone, and they were much

disappointed at hearing of the absence of their cousins.

Of course there was nothing for Mr. Martin to do, but to return their call, besides to give him all due credit he was honestly glad to meet Tom Carter again. Young Purcell he did not know, he had seen him once or twice when a mere lad, but all acquaintance with his wife's people ended at her death. Phœbe was delighted at the prospect of meeting a cousin.

"Fancy Eily!" she said, "a real, live, red-coat, for a cousin! What shall I call him? Ought I to say Mr. Purcell? or ought I to say Henry? I wonder is he called Henry or Harry? I hope the latter—I should like to call him Harry!"

"Well, do so!" said Eily smiling at her, she was amused at Phœbe's enthusiasm about this new-found cousin.

"But then if everybody calls him Henry!" objected Phœbe.

"Harry will be a change!"

Phœbe was all impatient for her father to go visit their cousins, but he put off doing so from day to day, and they were a week at home before he decided on going in to Athlone.

Colonel Carter heard of the arrival home of the Martins, and was expecting to see his cousin every day, and wondered much why he delayed in calling, but at last the pompous, portly Stephen, arrived to pay his devoir to the Colonel and officers of the 46th. He apologised for not coming sooner, and gave as his excuse the recent death of Sir Charles Langrishe, who was a connection by marriage.

Colonel Carter was a bachelor, he was a medium-sized, spare man, very active, very punctilious in all things, but more especially punctilious as regards all regulations of the service.

Lieutenant Purcell was a passably, good-looking young man, of average capabilities, but who thought rather more of himself than any one else did.

The following day, the two officers went over to New Garden to be presented to the ladies. Phœbe was rather disappointed at the first sight of her cousin, somehow in her mind's eye she had pictured quite a different kind of young man, she hoped to find him something like Gerry, but he wasn't in the least like him, and he had not been two minutes in her company before she came to

the conclusion that he was not half so nice as Gerry.

Mr. Purcell at once addressed her as Phœbe, which was his mother's name, and then she called him Henry.

"Nobody calls me Henry!" he said.

"Harry then!"

"Nor Harry either!"

Phœbe looked puzzled.

"I give it up," she declared, "I felt sure you were called Harry before I saw you, and then when you came, I thought you were Henry."

"No, I'm called Hal!"

Of course knowing the colonel of the regiment led to an acquaintance with the other officers, and much to Mr. Martin's disgust they became very frequent visitors at New Garden. He was miserable, he thought his wife was the attraction, he forgot his daughter completely, he never thought of her, he never imagined that a gay, lively, intelligent girl, not exactly pretty, but still not unpleasing, could be any attraction to men of the world. He never thought of his daughter, but he always did of his wife, he did not know that these men thought Eily beautiful, but dull,

some of them even said stupid. She was a prey to settled melancholy, and as day after day followed, she seemed to grow sadder, and more subdued. There were pic nics, tennis parties, dinners, and mild dissipation of various kinds, but nothing interested Eily. Once only she roused herself, or rather memory did. There was a pic nic on the fair island of Carberry, Eily heard it all planned and talked over, but took no part in the arrangements, indeed Phœbe took all details relative to entertainments under her management.

They went, and when Eily reached the dear little isle, memory came back with a rush. She thought of the picnic there the previous summer. She thought of Harold, she remembered how they two, and some others sat on the beach, and shied stones at an empty champagne bottle, and how they all laughed at their game of hit-and-miss ; and she remembered how they failed to break the bottle, and how it floated away, bobbing up and down, out on the bosom of the lake. She recollected how hope was buoyant in her heart that day, and now what hope remained ?

Alas ! none.

Life had nothing for her. She thought she was years older since that day last summer. It was only a year ago, yet it seemed an age.

Then she looked on the beach, and she remembered the very spot where she sat, and where Harold sat beside her, and she remembered how she thought it would be a good omen, if either she or Harold should succeed in breaking the bottle, and how she whispered to him, "Do try and break it," and how he threw the stones with a careful aim; and how his missiles always fell quite close to the bottle, but never hit it.

And then she remembered how a shadow of disappointment fell on her when the uninjured target floated away on the buoyant water.

After all it was an omen! her hopes floated away also!

And then she gave a little, hysterical laugh, and went and joined a noisy group. Memory was not a good companion that day, she must try and keep it at bay. There was only one way to do so; to talk incessantly, no matter about what.

A feverish gaiety enlivened her, the quiet, subdued manner disappeared, she was the

noisiest of the noisy party, she was the gayest of the gay.

Those who knew her previous to her marriage saw nothing strange in her manner, it was only her old spirits come back again, but the new comers were astonished. After all there was something in Mrs. Martin, she was not dull, nor was she stupid.

She was surrounded by men, for all she had smiles, gay sallies, arch glances, and it was not surprising if some of the on-lookers thought she was flirting.

Mr. Martin was wild, no other word could express the state of his mind. There was his wife, sitting calmly in his presence with five men, strangers, men whose acquaintance she only made a few short weeks ago, laughing with them, and at them, being teased by them and teasing them.

He would have liked to rush in among the group and snatch her away, and there is no knowing what he might have done but for the presence of Colonel Carter.

He was one of the five men, he was sitting next Eily, his steely, grey eyes were fixed on his cousin, and his look subdued the turbulent passion in Stephen Martin's breast.

But at last there was a move, they were all to have gone to Wild Park to spend the evening, and go from there home by road, but Stephen Martin carried his wife away *nolens volens*.

He would not go to Wild Park, nor would he allow Eily to go either. Phœbe might please herself, but she elected to return home, for she felt a storm was brewing, and she would not desert her young step-mother. This in a measure spoiled the party, but Mr. Martin's conduct and the instantaneous submission of his wife opened some people's eyes.

Mr. O'Mahon saw his daughter was unfairly treated, she was doing no wrong in laughing, and being gay, and he determined to speak to Mr. Martin about his extraordinary behaviour.

Colonel Carter saw too, and understood. He remembered how jealous his cousin used to be in his childhood and boyhood, jealous of small favours shown to other boys, and he remembered that big bully as he was, that then he was always cowed by defiance.

Colonel Carter pitied Eily, and determined to take her part, he would teach her to defy her husband.

Eily gained two champions, but they did not know they could give her little ease, they could not give her forgetfulness !

She was glad not to go to Wild Park that evening, for she never could go there without thinking of Harold. Do what she might, she could not forget him. Sometimes she wondered if he still remembered her.

She tried hard to do battle with her thoughts, but it was useless ; memory could not be subdued.

There was a stormy scene between the Martins, father and daughter, when they reached home, he kept his wrath down until they got to New Garden, and then he said harsh things to, and harsh things of his wife. She was silent, she did not utter one reproach, but Phœbe poured forth a torrent of words, there were bitter complaints, angry accusations, and finally she defied him, but she was no longer in a hotel, at home he was master, and he only laughed at his daughter.

From that time things were not very pleasant at New Garden, and little by little the military at Athlone gave up calling there. Mr. Martin made them feel they were not

wanted, only two still made it a custom to visit, namely, the Colonel and Mr. Purcell.

Eily was always glad to see them, she felt she had a friend in the former, and she knew she sadly needed one.

Mr. O'Mahon did speak to Mr. Martin after the picnic, the latter haughtily inquired if his wife had complained.

"No!" was the reply.

"Then when she does so it will be time enough for you to speak."

News came of the birth of a son and heir to Sir Percy Langrishe, Maud was doing well, and the baby was thriving.

How jealous this made Stephen Martin, he never hated Maud until he heard of the birth of her son, he disliked her before, but the news made him hate her.

Eily expressed a wish to go and see her sister, but he refused, and said some brutal things to her, which caused her to shed bitter tears. She never reproached him, she suffered in silence, and day by day she got paler and thinner.

Colonel Carter surprised her in tears one afternoon, he said what he could to console her, and later he spoke to his cousin ; some

very violent words passed between them, and then he went to Wild Park.

Next day Mr. O'Mahon came over to seek an interview with his son-in-law, but first he saw his daughter ; and from her he learned the cause of her tears the previous day. She had refused to tell Colonel Carter, but she told her father at once. She expected to be a mother, she did not wish for a child, and her thoughts made her low and nervous, so she could not help crying.

Then Mr. O'Mahon went to Mr. Martin's study.

"I have come to tell you that I mean to take my daughter home."

"You'll do nothing of the kind," was the resolute reply.

"I cannot see my child suffer. I insist on her coming home."

"My wife shall not leave here ! "

"But you treat her abominably ! No woman could stand such conduct, and Eily must come home."

"I repeat again, my wife shall not leave here. She is mine to do as I choose with—I paid a big price for her."

"What do you mean ?"

"Oh! I forgot," said the tyrant, with an insolent laugh, "you are in the dark—go ask her—did I not give a big price for her?"

"Speak out man!" cried Mr. O'Mahon. "What do you mean? I fail to comprehend you."

"I bought and paid for my wife, she is mine!"

"Bought and paid for Eily?"

"Yes! quite true!"

"Explain!" said Mr. O'Mahon, in a curt tone.

"Did it never strike you that I have not demanded the last two half-years' interest on the mortgage?"

"I paid both!" was the immediate response.

"I never got a penny."

"My wife gave me the receipts."

"Indeed?" said Mr. Martin, with a fiendish laugh. "If my lady mother gave you the receipts, she must have—ahem—I won't use such an ugly word in connection with so fair a lady, but I never gave her the receipts, for the very good reason that I never got the money."

"Then what became of it?" exclaimed

Mr. O'Mahon, looking alarmed, for he felt a dread of something unknown.

"You must ask madame," was the reply.

"Then, do I understand that I owe you two half-years' interest, besides the present gale?"

"Not a penny, Mr. O'Mahon. You owe me nothing."

"Nothing! nothing!"

"Yes, nothing, Mr. O'Mahon! Wild Park is quite free since the day of my marriage with your daughter. You will hardly deny *now* that I did not pay a big price for her?"

Mr. O'Mahon stood stupified, he could hardly comprehend what he heard, but he knew enough to understand that there was something very wrong. He sank into a chair, and seemed to gasp for breath; his looks alarmed Mr. Martin, who got him some brandy, which instantly revived the poor, stricken man.

"Will you be good enough to explain everything? Keep nothing back," he said, in a husky voice.

Then Stephen Martin told how the bargain had been made, how the mortgage deed had

been given into Mrs. O'Mahon's care, and how Eily destroyed it after her marriage.

"But I suppose you are not a fool, Stephen!" said Mr. O'Mahon calmly, "you could have proved the execution of the deed—of course it was registered. I am a man of honour, I should never have disputed the question with you."

Mr. Martin was silent for some time; he was paring a pencil, and when he pointed it to his satisfaction he spoke—

"I am ashamed to say it was not registered. There is nothing in the world to prove that such a deed ever existed—the two witnesses are dead."

"Not registered!"

"No!" answered Mr. Martin. "Wild Park is quite free. You may remember the deed was executed in Finucane's office; he said he was going up to Dublin a few days later, and that he would have it registered."

"I remember perfectly," remarked Mr. O'Mahon.

"Then you will probably recall that he complained of a chill."

"Yes," was the subdued response.

"The poor fellow went no more to his office ; he died within a week. Then your solicitor Dobson took over the business, but I did not like him, and removed my papers. The deed had not been registered, and I never thought about it, for I was in trouble at the time, and my wife died shortly after. I put all my papers in a tin box, and left it with Mulvany and Son. I got the deed, and gave it to your wife, and only learnt it was not registered after it was destroyed. Wild Park is quite free."

"But this is dishonest!" cried Mr. O'Mahon.

"A husband is answerable for his wife's conduct," was Mr. Martin's response. "Eily destroyed the deed, and I must be the loser."

"But it is not honest."

"Never mind ; your boy will probably marry my daughter—they seem to like each other—and that will square the matter."

"But if an heir is born to you ?" said Mr. O'Mahon.

"Pshaw ! no such luck !"

"But Eily has hopes," said her father.

"Hope of a child ?" asked Mr. Martin ;
"she never told me."

"You could hardly expect her to tell you, but what I have just said is true."

"Say no more, Mr. O'Mahon—the news you have given me is enough to recompense me for the loss of the deed. If Eily were only content, I should be satisfied."

"We can execute it again; I am a man of honour."

"I doubt if it could be done now without your son's sanction, and if he and Phœbe marry it does not matter."

Again the sick, faint sensation came over Mr. O'Mahon, he knew what it meant, but Mr. Martin could not understand how a strong, healthy-looking man could be liable to such symptoms.

"Do you often get these attacks?"

"Not often," replied Mr. O'Mahon. "Don't say anything to Eily about them—it might alarm her. For God's sake, Stephen, be kinder to the child!"

"I want to make her happy, but nothing seems to please her—she is so dull and listless."

"Her baby will arouse her, but again I implore you, be kind to her, let her see more company, let her have Maud over by-and-by."

"I will do my best to please her, so help me God!" was Stephen Martin's earnest response.

"Thanks, Stephen, for your promise. Now, one question more—have you any idea what my wife did with the money?"

"None whatever."

"She shall tell me," and Mr. O'Mahon looked as if his wife were likely to have a bad time by-and-by.

Then he left the room in a dejected manner, and went to say good-bye to his daughter.

"What is the matter with you, papa?" she asked, the moment she saw him.

"Nothing of much consequence. I have got a shock, Eily—it is only now that I have learnt that you sold yourself to free us from debt—you were wrong to do it."

"I suppose I was, papa; but it is too late now to repent."

"Try and be happy, my child. Tell me—did your mother force you?"

"Not exactly," replied Eily. "Did Stephen tell you nothing more?"

"No! except—my God!—it maddens me to think of it."

"What, papa?" asked Eily.

"I gave the money to your mother to pay the interest—she told me she paid it." He looked round the room, and then, in a whisper, added, "She gave me the receipts, and they look all right."

Eily hung her head in silence and shame, and the thought came, was it possible her mother had forged the receipts? But her father evidently knew nothing about the diamonds, her husband had not told, and she felt grateful to him for his silence. Mr. O'Mahon fondly kissed his daughter.

"God bless you my darling," he said; "try and be more satisfied with your lot. You ought to be happy—you have everything that the heart of woman can desire."

He met Phoebe in the hall; she too noticed something strange in his looks, and asked what was the matter with him, but he assured her there was nothing wrong. Then he kissed her for the first time, and asked her to do her best to cheer up Eily.

Outside his trap was waiting, but he told

the man to drive home, for he preferred to walk. Then he stepped out with a firm, determined gait ; he wanted to think over all he heard, and he wanted to be ready to question his wife.

CHAPTER X.

ABOUT half-past ten o'clock the same evening, just as the Martins were thinking of retiring, they heard a vehicle rapidly approaching the house, and then there was a loud knock at the door.

Instantly Eily felt a presentiment of coming evil, and followed her husband out to the hall, where they found Gerry questioning the servant.

"He didn't dine here!" said Gerry.
"Then where can he be?"

"Oh! something has happened," cried Eily. "I have felt such a load on my heart all day."

"Don't be alarmed, dear!" answered her brother. "What hour did he leave here?"

They entered the drawing-room, and there an anxious consultation was held. Gerry told how the servant arrived home with the trap about five o'clock, and said his master was walking back. Seven o'clock came, and there was no sign of Mr. O'Mahon; another

hour passed, and he did not come ; so Gerry and his mother came to the conclusion that he remained to dinner at New Garden, and that the man had misunderstood the message. Therefore Gerry started with the dog-cart, never for an instant thinking but that he should find his father all right at his brother-in-law's house. He was startled, and felt anxious. Where could his father be ? or what could have happened to him ?

"He was quite well, was he not ?" asked Gerry.

"Yes, quite," answered Eily, "but I didn't think he looked well, and I know he was troubled."

Mr. Martin started at Gerry's question. He remembered the sick faintness that seized his father-in-law in his study ; he said nothing about it, but instantly gave orders for immediate search to be made for Mr. O'Mahon.

Mr. Martin said he would drive the trap back, and when passing through Athlone he would call for Dr. Boyton, in case medical aid might be required. Gerry, accompanied by some men, were to walk.

It was six miles from New Garden to Wild Park by road, just half that distance across

country. There was a footpath nearly all the way, except through a couple of fields lying between the two demesnes. Mr. Martin started at once, and when he reached Wild Park another party should be sent to meet them coming from New Garden.

Gerry had to wait for lanterns to be prepared. Eily, after she recovered the first shock, was calm and composed, and wanted to accompany her brother; but he was firm, and would not allow her to do so on any account, and he begged Phœbe to remain with his sister and try to assuage her fears.

The poor young fellow started with a heavy heart. Eily had imbued him with her idea, and he, too, felt that something had happened.

He and the men walked on almost in silence; they hardly spoke, only a word now and then. They flashed their lanterns to the right and the left, but they saw nothing. They startled the birds among the trees, and here and there a frightened rabbit scudded across their path, but there was no other sign of life. They came to the end of the New Garden grounds, and knocked at a cabin that stood on the roadside.

“Yes !” the woman answered to their inquiries, “I did see Mr. O’Mahon ; he stopped and asked me for a drink of water. I gave it to him, and he took a sip and then went on, and I saw him crossing the stile at the other side of the field.”

This was some news, so the searchers hurried rapidly across the field. They did not pause to look there, for at all events he was seen to leave it. They came to the second field, and then they paused. Did he skirt round nearly two sides, or did he cross it cornerwise ? Gerry was of opinion that his father took the path round the edge, but they divided the party ; some went each way, but they met, and neither had seen anything. Then they crossed a second stile, and they were in the Wild Park demesne. The path for a short distance led along the border of the lake ; nothing, still nothing. They saw lights flashing in the distance, and they knew another party was starting from the house.

After a while, the path led away from the lake through a little grove. There was a slight rise in the ground where the trees were thickest. Suddenly there was a cry from the

foremost man. They found what they were looking for.

No ! not what they came out to search for. They came out to look for Mr. O'Mahon, and they did not find him. They found his body.

There he lay dead ! He must have been dead for hours !

Gerry flung himself beside his father. One glance revealed the truth, but he was not satisfied. He tore open the vest, and put his hand to feel for the heart, and then he knew it was stilled for ever. With a cry of grief he turned away.

"Mayhap he was murdered," said one of the bystanders in an awed tone.

The man only spoke what he thought, and some of the others were of the same opinion, but the words acted on Gerry as an electric shock.

"Murdered !" he cried. "Who would dare to do so evil a deed ? My father had not an enemy in the world."

He spoke only the truth, yet a wild fear was knocking at his heart. The death of his father was bad enough as it was, but if his end were hastened by a murderous hand

it would be worse for those who were left to lament his loss.

The Wild Park party soon arrived, Dr. Boyton and Mr. Martin with them.

The former knelt down and bent his head to listen, but he raised it in an instant.

"It is as I feared; he is dead—has been so for some hours. Gerry, I am sorry for you all, but I feared this—I told him so—I warned him!"

"Told him what? Warned him about what? Oh, for God's sake, don't tell me he has been murdered."

"No, no, Gerry!" cried the doctor hastily. "No man is guilty of his death; he has been taken by the hand of the Almighty. He died of heart disease."

"I didn't know anything was wrong with him!" sobbed Gerry.

"Nor did I until last week. He came to me, and I told him the truth. I warned him against excitement of any kind. I cautioned him against walking too rapidly, especially up hill. He must have been walking quickly up this rise. You see he got just to the top, and then the cord snapped, and he was gone in a second. If it is any consolation to you

to know that he was not lying here helpless and conscious, I can assure you he was not. He was dead as he fell to the ground ! ”

Then some one went back to the cabin, and they improvised a rude litter and carried the remains home.

Mr. Martin went on and broke the sad news to the widow, but he did not tell her all, for he felt that he in a measure was to blame ; still, if he were blameable, there was another who was culpable.

That other was the widow.

At the first shock her grief was intense ; she only thought of her husband as the lover of her youth, the father of her children. Then Gerry came, and the mother and son mourned together.

“ There will have to be an inquest,” said Dr. Boyton.

“ Oh ! why ? ” gasped Gerry in affright.

The idea of such a thing was most painful to him.

“ It is necessary ; the law requires it ; but it will be a mere formal proceeding. Don’t trouble about it ; I shall see the coroner and arrange with him. Can I do anything else ? ”

"Telegraph to Maud," sobbed Mrs. O'Mahon.

Then Mr. Martin thought of his wife, sitting at home waiting for news.

"Gerry," he said, "will you tell Eily? I could not bear to do it. I'll stay with your mother until you return."

Stephen Martin feared to tell his wife of her father's death. He thought she might upbraid him, and he felt that he deserved reproach.

A second time that night Eily heard a vehicle approach. She went out and met Gerry in the hall. His face told her all, there was no need for him to speak.

"He is dead!" she said calmly.

"Yes," was the low response.

"How?"

"Dr. Boyton says heart disease."

"Heart disease!" echoed Eily. "I know, I understand."

She looked at her brother, and said no more. She did not wish to burden him with the knowledge that was hers, and then tears came to her relief.

"Will you come over?" asked Gerry after a while.

"Of course I'll go, but not yet. I could not see—no, I don't know. I'll wait until Maud comes."

Then Gerry left her. He would return to his home, to where the remains of his father lay waiting for the verdict of the coroner's jury.

The inquest was a mere formality. Dr. Boyton explained, and the whole affair was over in a short time. It was found that George O'Mahon died of heart disease.

There was no rider to that verdict. The jury did not know that any one was to blame in any way, but two persons felt they were not blameless.

Mrs. O'Mahon knew that the information given by Stephen Martin to her husband hastened his death, and he knew that such was the case.

Eily knew also, but she attached no blame to her husband, although he had given her father his death blow. She considered her mother was the sole culprit.

In due time Maud and her husband arrived at Wild Park. It was a sad home-coming for the idolized daughter who had been her father's favourite. After her first, wild burst

of grief, she turned to her mother, and tried to console her.

Then Eily came. She passed through the hall without looking to the right or the left, went up the wide staircase, and turned into the room where her dear, dead father was lying—the loved parent who only a little while ago held her hand in his warm clasp, and talked to her, and bade her be of good cheer. There he lay mute for ever! Never again could she hear his cheery voice, never again should she see his loving smile. She kissed the poor, dead brow, the dear, cold hands again and again, and then she knelt in prayer beside his pillow.

While thus engaged, Maud came to her and put her arms round her, and the sisters mingled their tears together, amid broken sentences, and subdued sobs, and then they prayed. A soft step approached. Eily shivered as she heard it, and the mother knelt beside her daughters.

There was silence in the chamber of death.

At last Eily rose from her knees, once again she looked at the dear, dead face, once again she pressed her warm lips to the marble brow, and then she turned away.

"Eily! Eily! Won't you speak to me?" cried her mother.

"Not here! Look at him well—and then come to the next room."

Mrs. O'Mahon did not glance towards the dead, but followed her daughter. "Come with me Maud," was all she said.

They went into the adjoining room.

Eily was standing in the middle, her long, black robe trailing on the floor, her sable garments making her look ghastly white.

"Did you look at your work?" she asked quietly. There was not the least sign of emotion.

"Eily, how can you say such dreadful things?" cried Maud.

"I say nothing but the truth. The darling was at New Garden. That day for the first time he learnt the truth about my marriage. He was grieved, but that knowledge did not kill him, nor did he know about the diamonds. My husband did not tell him, and I am grateful to him for being silent. It is a comfort that our father was spared knowing everything. The sword that killed him was the knowledge that his wife—our mother, Maud—was—a—forger!"

Mrs. O'Mahon started with horror.

Maud looked stupified. She tried to speak, but the words would not come. But at last, with a gasp she cried—

“Eily, you do not know what you are saying.”

“I know too well! He told me!”

“It is not true! Indeed Eily it is not true!” cried Mrs. O'Mahon.

For answer, her daughter turned to a press.

“Give me the key!” she said in a stern voice.

“I did not”— But Mrs. O'Mahon could say no more. Eily's glance cowed her, and without a murmur she gave the key.

Eily unlocked the press, and took therefrom a file on which were many papers. She sat down and examined the receipts, and soon found what she wanted.

“Look here, Maud! Here are two receipts, printed forms such as my husband always uses. They are filled up in acknowledgment of the receipt of the two last half-years' interest due through the deed of mortgage. They are signed ‘Stephen

Martin.' He never gave such receipts, for he got no such money!"

Mrs. O'Mahon was sobbing violently. She muttered words, but they were unintelligible.

At last she was heard to say—

"I never wrote his name."

Meanwhile Maud had been examining the papers attentively. She looked at one and put it down with a deep sigh, she could only think one thing about the transaction. Then she took the other, looked at it minutely, and held it up to the light.

"See here, Eily!" she said. "The figures have been tampered with!"

"Yes," sobbed Mrs. O'Mahon; "that was how I did it. I never forged anything, I only changed the figures. The receipts were both for the year '70."

It was a relief to Eily to hear that her mother was not guilty of forging her husband's name. She looked and saw that the receipts had been altered. They were rather clumsily done, but they were sufficient to deceive poor Mr. O'Mahon, who rarely troubled himself with details. Mrs. O'Mahon managed everything.

"I see," said Eily. "But nevertheless, the knowledge of your deceit killed him. I look upon you as the cause of his death. In time, perhaps I may be able to forgive you, but while he is lying in there I could not. Do not come to me until I send for you. Maud, you will come soon. I am going now."

And Eily left the home of her childhood without another glance at Mrs. O'Mahon. For the second time she quitted her mother's side without a word of farewell. As she did on the day of her marriage, she did the day she looked on her dead father.

The next morning he was given his allotted space in God's acre.

Maud questioned her mother, and learned that her sole reason for deceiving her husband was fear. She was afraid to tell him that Wild Park was free. She was afraid to say anything about it, for she feared one thing might lead to another, and she wanted to hide about the gift of diamonds.

Those miserable diamonds! They were the cause of Eily's unhappiness, and of her father's death. If they had never been accepted there would have been nothing to keep secret. They proved a fatal gift!

Maud spent a few days with her sister, but she was impatient to be gone. She longed to get back to her baby, but she promised to return soon, and she would then bring the heir with her.

Mr. Martin was glad to do his wife's bidding, for he regretted the estrangement that existed, and was anxious there should be no coolness between Eily and her mother.

And so, when Christmas came, the time of peace and goodwill, Mrs. O'Mahon, accompanied by her son, went to her daughter's home.

Sir Percy and Lady Langrishe, Colonel Carter, and Hal Purcell were there also, but no one else, it was only a family party, and they were content to spend a quiet Christmas. There was one visitor, a very important one, who was made a fuss about, although his name has not been mentioned. This was Maud's infant son, the young heir to the house of Langrishe, a fine, healthy, handsome babe, with the fair, curly locks, and blue eyes of his father.

Maud adored her son, and Eily felt surprised at herself at taking so much interest in the doings of her little nephew. She watched his smiles, and listened to his gurglings with curiosity. Phœbe made herself a kind of assistant nurse for the time being, so that a deal of baby-worship took place every day.

Mr. Martin looked on the young heir with interest, a little while ago he might have felt differently disposed towards Maud's son, but now he was satisfied, for he was looking to the future.

Even Master Puggie condescended to notice baby, who seemed to him to be some *lusus naturæ*, it was impossible to keep him out of the nursery, he would sit there for hours watching the nurse and her infant charge.

The family party broke up early in the new year, and then things went on smoothly enough at New Garden, and time went by quickly.

March came, and then the Martins went up to Dublin, and were shortly joined there by Maud and her baby, Sir Percy came with his wife, but could not remain as his parliamentary duties claimed him.

Eily was very delicate, and her health caused much anxiety to her friends. She was not very patient, she was captious and *difficile*, but Maud seemed to be able to please her better than any one else.

One day Phœbe brought in a small bouquet of lilies of the valley, and having put them in

a tiny vase, she placed it on the table at Eily's side.

"Look, dear!" she said, "I have got you some early lilies, are they not sweet?"

Eily looked with a listless, careless glance but memory came back.

For a second she thought of her father, and she thought of Harold.

"I hate them!" she cried, "oh, take them away! never let me see them!"

Phoebe looked at her in astonishment.

"Oh, why did you bring them?" continued Eily, "I hate them!" She seized the vase, and flung it and the flowers in the blazing fire, and then she burst into an uncontrollable fit of weeping.

What strange tricks memory plays us sometimes!

How often things are brought back that we want to forget!

Memory leaps over time, in a second; the event of years ago comes back with such force to our minds, that it seems to us but as a thing of yesterday.

A perfume, a flower, a song, a sound, a word may bring remembrance with a light-

ning rapidity. Yes, memory is a very curious thing, and it is odd how it is awakened!

I never hear a song, a particular one, a sad song, without instantly thinking of one evening that I went to Hengler's Circus years ago. There is no connection between a clown and a sad, melodious song, yet whenever I hear it, I remember the clown, I see him before me, with his painted face, his motley dress, I hear him whistling the opening bars of that sad melody.

Again, I never hear or see the word *automaton* without remembering a naughty, little boy, at least he was that day. He got up that morning, on the wrong side as naughty little boys sometimes do. He was sulky, he would not speak, he would not stir, he would not eat, he sat there twirling his thumbs, his mother said, "Never mind him, he is only an automaton."

He did not know the meaning of the word, but it aroused him; and the little fury in him burst forth, he screamed, he kicked, he struck with his clenched fists.

That happened years ago, yet the word *automaton* brings back that scene to my

mind, with all the freshness of a yesterday's occurrence.

Then, too, I never hear a cock crow without remembering the saddest hours of my life, and yet there is no link between death and the voice of Chanticleer.

So it is with us all, some very trivial thing will cause us to remember events long past, with a startling freshness.

The lilies of the valley brought sad memory back to Eily. She thought of that bright June day, the first time that Harold Detmar went to Wild Park ; she remembered her father amongst his roses, and she remembered culling a bouquet of lilies for Harold. Eily thought of them both, her father was at rest in his grave, and Harold was away in a distant land ; far from home and friends, 'neath Afric's burning sun.

She wept on, wept passionately, hysterically, and at last she was tired out, and she sank off asleep.

Next day Eily was a mother, and Stephen Martin's one wish, one desire was gratified, for a son was born to him. How proud he felt, how pompous he got at once, how important that tiny atom of humanity was in

his eyes. He seemed to think the world was his own, he long wanted an heir, and now he had one. He did not heed the doctor's word of warning, "A boy," he said, "but a puny weak infant."

He thought of nothing but the fact that he was the father of a son.

As the days went by Eily slowly regained strength, and as she did so, her infant's failed, and at last Stephen Martin awoke to the consciousness that the little life was but a very feeble one.

What agony it was to him to learn the truth, and how he besought the doctors and the nurses to save his son. It was curious to see this big, strong man steal into the nursery, and look with anxiety on the little wan, pinched-looking baby, who was making a struggle for life.

In silence the father would turn to the attendants, but they could give him no word of comfort, they could only say as long as there is life there is hope.

Maud broke gently, very gently to her sister, the fact that her baby's life was at stake. Eily listened in a kind of wonder, but she seemed to take no interest, to care no-

thing. God's gift was not prized by her, the birth of her baby made no difference to her.

Days went by—the little lamp of life grew weaker, and at last the mother learned that her child's home was among the angels.

"Poor little thing!" she said, and she turned her eyes back to the page she was reading.

The father's grief was intense, it was bitter agony to him, to lose that much-longed-for son, and Phœbe mingled her tears with his, she was one of those girls who love babies, and she mourned over her little brother with heartfelt sorrow. Poor little baby! his sister's and his aunt's tears fell on him, as they laid him in his little blue-velvet coffin. Then they asked Eily if she would like to see her child once more.

"Yes!" she replied, in an indifferent tone.

They brought the little flower-decked, dead baby to her side, she looked at the tiny, still face in awed silence, and then a feeling of curiosity came over her. Was that little waxen image really her child? was it ever living? she put forth her hand, and touched the tiny face, and felt the chill of death.

"How curious!" she said, "I thought it

was a wax doll until I touched it ! Thanks ! you may take it away, please ! ” and she took up her book and resumed her reading.

No mother’s tear, no mother’s kiss, no mother’s lament had Eily for her child !

Maud rushed from the room in horror, she could not understand this apathy of her sister, she could not think it possible a mother could look unmoved on her dead child, and she felt frightened at Eily’s want of feeling. Maud wept over the little babe, and thought it was well that God had taken him back, for if his mother had no love for him, his life could hardly be a bright one.

Maud felt for the bereaved father, and condoled with him, and at last they two were friends, he felt grateful to her for her sympathy. She pitied him and kept her own blooming boy out of his sight.

Mr. Martin took the body of his little heir down to the family vault at Athlone, and the infant Gerald Martin was left to sleep with others of his race.

CHAPTER XII.

And once again I see that brow,
No bridal wreath was there,
The widow's sombre cap conceals
Her bright luxuriant hair.

THE weather was bad, it was bitter cold, wintry weather, instead of mild spring days. Stephen Martin in his grief for his son's death forgot himself, and neglected to take the usual care of his health. He caught cold on his way down to Athlone, and instead of staying quietly there, and taking some remedies, he returned to Dublin and increased his cold on the journey back.

Bronchitis set in, and in a few days the strong man was as feeble as an infant. The best medical aid was of no avail, all was done that could be to alleviate his sufferings. Eily was frightened when she saw her husband stretched helpless on his sick bed, she remained with him but she could do nothing to help him. Maud and Phœbe were his constant nurses, for he couldn't bear to have strangers about him.

Mr. Martin learned from the doctor the

truth about his condition, it was most precarious, his life was hanging in the balance.

"Write a note to Mulvany," he said to his wife, "tell him I want to see him immediately."

Eily wrote and summoned the solicitor, who came at once to his client's bedside.

"Did you bring my will?" asked Mr. Martin in a husky voice.

"No!" replied Mr. Mulvany.

"Why not? you might have guessed I wish to make an alteration."

"As the baby died, there is no change required," said Mr. Mulvany, "besides is it well to worry yourself with worldly affairs now?"

"I was wrong not to take your advice," said the sick man, "I cannot die in peace and leave it as it is."

"Tell me the change you want to make."

A violent fit of coughing interrupted Mr. Martin for some minutes, he could not speak, he could hardly breathe, but at last in a low, broken voice, he succeeded in explaining his wishes to Mr. Mulvany, who gave a start of joyful surprise at hearing them.

"All right Mr. Martin!" he said, "I will

add a codicil to that effect, and I shall return in half an hour."

The solicitor hurried away, and was back again at the appointed time, with him came a clerk, and the signature of Mr. Martin was duly witnessed by him and the doctor who happened to be in the house at the time.

After this business was off his mind Mr. Martin seemed easier, he asked his wife to forgive him for all his harshness to her. Unhesitatingly she assured him of her entire forgiveness. Then he spoke of Wild Park and the mortgage.

"If Gerry marries Phœbe it will be all squared," he said, "never regret having burnt the deed, Eily."

Late that night his breathing became slower and more difficult, and little by little the strong man gave up his battle for life, and one lovely spring morning Eily found herself a widow.

Just a fortnight after the little baby was left in the vault at Athlone, his father was placed beside him. The strong man had succumbed almost as easily as his infant son.

Eily was surrounded by her loved ones, she was quiet as usual, subdued as ever.

Some days after the funeral, Mr. Mulvany sent to know her commands, he was anxious to hear when she would like to have the will opened. She said she didn't care!

But Maud interfered.

"My dear!" she said, "remember Phœbe is also interested in this business, and it is better to get it over at once."

"Very well!" answered Eily, "you can tell him to come."

Accordingly next day Mr. Mulvany appeared with the document.

"Before reading this, the last will and testament of my late respected client," he said, "I must ask all present to suspend any verdict until I have finished. Please do not form any opinion until you hear the final codicil. I have taken the liberty of making these few remarks as some might think the document unjust."

There was silence among those present, Eily and Phœbe sat together on the sofa, Maud was near the window, Sir Percy and Gerry at the table. Mr. Mulvany opened the will and read it.

Mr. Martin bequeathed the whole of his property, consisting of land, houses, stock,

shares, to two trustees who were to divide the income equally between his wife and daughter. The trustees were to be appointed, one by his wife, the other by his daughter. In the event of his said wife's marriage the entire income was to be paid over to his daughter, and there was a solemn injunction, forbidding her to contribute one farthing to the support of his said wife, if she contracted a second marriage. Mr. Mulvany hurried over this part of the document, Phœbe gave Eily's hand a loving squeeze, but the young widow hardly seemed to comprehend what she heard.

The solicitor cleared his voice, and read the codicil in a louder tone.

The testator revoked that portion of his will relative to his wife's marriage. He bequeathed her the half of his property absolutely. She was free to dispose of it as she pleased, she was tied in no way, she was not even encumbered by trustees. Phœbe's share was to be held in trust for her by Sir Percy Langrishe and Colonel Carter, who were appointed her guardians. Mr. Martin bequeathed to his sister-in-law, Lady Langrishe, a legacy of £300 as a token of

gratitude for her sympathy in a time of trouble; to Mrs. O'Mahon a like sum was left, and also to Colonel Carter.

That was all, the will was concise and clear, Phœbe was a rich heiress, and Eily was a rich widow, unfettered by any restriction. She was free to dispose of her large fortune as she pleased, and she was free to marry again. Eily did not think of this, she only wondered why her husband added that codicil. She did not know how the birth of the little baby softened his heart, at all events he relented before it was too late.

The spring passed, and summer came, and, as time went by, Eily regained her health, and her former beauty returned in all its brightness. The soft bloom was again seen in her face, the old light came back to her lovely eyes; her step became elastic as of yore, and, as she wandered among her flowers at New Garden, her voice could be heard humming the old favourite songs of her girlhood.

Eily and Phœbe wanted to have no formal division of the property, but the trustees, of course, could not permit such an arrangement, and the proceedings all took place *en*

régle ; and when affairs were finally settled the widow and the heiress found they were very much richer than they expected.

Summer went by, and there was a great deal of speculation as to what Mrs. and Miss Martin would do, but they remained very quietly at home, and seemed to be quite satisfied with their lot. Gerry was constantly with them, Colonel Carter also was a frequent visitor, and he often spoke of his responsibility as guardian of the heiress. Mr. Purcell came too, and report said the *beaux yeux* of the young widow attracted him to New Garden.

The early autumn came, and one morning Eily received a letter, a foreign one. As she looked at it, the hot blood rushed to her face, and a bright look of joy came to her eyes. She did not open it then ; she knew who was the writer. Breakfast over, she rushed to her room, and locked herself in, and then with trembling fingers she opened the welcome letter.

It was from Harold.

He told her he heard that she was free ! Free for him to tell her of his love ; he was

not changed in the least ; he loved her still, would love her to the last hour of his life, and he asked her to write to him, if only one line, to tell him he might hope. Then he told her how his regiment was just on the point of marching towards Zululand, but for that he would try to get a few months' leave, for he longed to see her, to hear her voice once more, but duty was imperative ; he could not think of such a thing until the Zulus were taught to know the power of England. A short time would be sufficient to teach them a lesson, and then he would go home after a victorious campaign.

It is needless to say that Harold's letter caused great happiness to Eily, and once again she made Puck her confidant, she told him everything, how much she loved Harold, and what she should write to him.

"After all," she thought, "life is a good thing !" It is a very good thing when the beacon of hope is in view.

A few months before Eily could only look back, the past, a very short past, was all she knew of happiness, but now she looked forward. She even thought of old age, she

no longer wished for an early grave, and she shuddered when she thought of what had been her constant prayer.

She wrote to Harold, wrote to him at once, a loving, kind letter, such as he expected to get, and she begged him to be very careful, very prudent, not to run any unnecessary risk, and to take great care of himself for her sake.

Such was her prayer to her lover, and when he received her letter he smiled at her anxiety. There was no danger, no risk, he was safe, and he was happy in knowing there was a future in store for him—a future worth living for.

Eily at home in Ireland dreamt of the future; Harold away in Africa also dreamt, and their dreams were very similar.

Bright flowers shall bloom wherever we rove,
A voice Divine shall talk in each stream;
The stars shall look like worlds of love,
And this earth be all one beautiful dream.

Thousands of miles of land and sea divided Eily and Harold, but in thought they were ever together, and they both dreamed of a future, when there should be no separation for them.

CHAPTER XIII.

AFTER that first letter, Harold wrote frequently, and Eily was as regular in replying to her lover's missives. How happy she was, and how she watched for the arrival of the African mail. She could always calculate exactly when Harold's letters ought to arrive in Athlone, and she went herself, or sent a special messenger to meet the mid-day mail, for there was only a morning post to New Garden. Eily never waited for her news, for she knew when the letter ought to come, and sent to meet it. One day that she went herself, she met with a disappointment, there was nothing for her. How frightened she got, she feared a thousand things, and spent a miserable afternoon. Phœbe did her utmost to console her, but in vain. That first little blow brought her spirits down to zero, or, indeed below it. She wondered how could she exist in such anxiety until the next mail day, but joy came to her in the morning. The expected letter was in the

post-bag, there had been some hours' delay somewhere, which caused Eily to spend a miserable night, conjuring all sorts of horrors.

Christmas came, and a family gathering assembled at Fernleigh. The Dowager Lady Langrishe, and her sister were the first arrivals, then came Mrs. O'Mahon, Gerry, Eily, and Phœbe. The meeting between Mrs. Detmar and her future daughter-in-law was very affectionate, and they two became friends at once. They would spend hours together, of course talking about Harold, and there was not an anecdote connected with his babyhood and boyhood that his mother did not tell to Eily, and in a few days she knew everything about her lover.

These were happy hours for Mrs. Detmar; it was so delightful for her to find a sympathetic listener, and one who loved Harold too. Sometimes a little pang of jealousy would dart through her heart, henceforth she should have to yield the first place in her son's affection, but then when she looked at Eily she did not wonder that Harold had enshrined her image in his heart; she could not blame him for loving so fair a woman.

Miss Ferrers also arrived at Fernleigh, she was in the highest spirits, for she was much rejoiced at the state of affairs; the engagement of Eily and Harold pleased her immensely.

Eily was very happy! there was only one thing that troubled her. She was afraid things would not come right between Gerry and Phoebe. They were friends, great chums and allies, but there was not the least sign of their being anything nearer and dearer, they were just like brother and sister, and Eily began to fear they would never be anything but friends. This pained her excessively. She hoped so much for a marriage between her brother and step-daughter, she knew both her husband and her father wished it, and she thought it would clear her from all blame about destroying the mortgage deed.

Gerry had been surprised to find himself possessor of Wild Park, untrammelled by any debt, he could not understand it, but Mrs. O'Mahon managed a little story very nicely, which the "boy" fully believed. She told him that Mr. Martin gave Eily the deed to do as she pleased with, and that she de-

stroyed it. Of course that was the truth in a measure, but she did not tell him the ins and outs of the case.

They were a very happy party that Christmas, and even Eily seemed more loving towards her mother, than she had been since her marriage.

"Eily my child!" said Mrs. O'Mahon to her daughter that Christmas morn, "I hope you have forgiven me, and that you no longer feel bitterly towards me!"

"Mother!" she replied, "I do not feel bitterly towards you now. For some things I have forgiven you—the day I am married to Harold, I shall freely forgive and forget all."

"Then my forgiveness is only a question of months—your marriage is very certain."

"I hope so!" answered Eily, with a little sigh.

She could not have told why she sighed, and she wondered why she did herself, and then she remembered that nothing is certain in life, but still that thought did not tend to dim her cheerful spirits.

Before the new year dawned, Maud's second son was born.

The old baronet would have rejoiced greatly at the event, if he were living, the damned sneak's chance was getting beautifully less, for Lady Langrishe's sons were fine healthy children. The heir was a splendid little fellow, who looked on the new arrival in the nursery as a very unwelcome intruder; he sulked for a day, but his aunt Eily, and the pug succeeded in consoling him. Puck's wonder at the new baby was something ludicrous, but he did not evince the least jealousy, although his mistress constantly had him in her arms.

One day Eily was surprised by Phœbe in tears, as she was lulling her baby nephew to sleep.

"Darling what are you crying for?" said Phœbe. "I thought you were so happy!"

"So I am!" replied Eily, wiping her eyes, "but I was thinking about my baby. I was wondering how it was that I never had him in my arms."

"You were so weak, and his life was so short."

"Yes, I know; but Phœbe I often wonder why I did not love my baby. Perhaps if I had loved him, he might have lived, and"—

"No! no! he could not live!" quickly interposed Phœbe.

"I know I was wicked, and I am sorry now—very sorry now," murmured Eily, sadly.

"You wicked! what morbid fancy is taking possession of you?" asked Phœbe, with a smile.

"I was wicked! Now I have cried for my baby at last, so I confess, I really think, I was glad that he died."

"Glad! oh no! don't say that!"

"I thought I could never love him, so I was glad he died—now I know better—I could have loved my baby."

Thus was Eily changed. She did not sorrow for her child when she lost him, because her heart was heavy, but now, that life lay smiling before her, now that there was a prospect of future happiness, she mourned the little life that flitted across hers for such a short span of time.

The new baby was duly christened amid great rejoicings. Eily and Gerry were his sponsors, and at the request of the former he was named Harold Detmar.

Then the O'Mahons and Miss Ferrers left, Mrs. Detmar and Lady Langrishe remained, also Eily and Phœbe, and when Maud was strong enough, they should all go to Brighton together.

CHAPTER XIV.

But let the angry sun
From heaven look fiercely red,
Unfelt by those whose task is done!
There slumber England's dead.

DAYS went on peacefully at Fernleigh, there was nothing to disturb the domestic harmony which reigned in this happy home, except little discussions between Sir Percy and his mother, relative to his elder son. Maud's health was quite re-established, and she was able to resume her place as mistress, but as the weather was very bad, the contemplated move to Brighton was postponed for a time.

The Dowager was like all grandmammias, very fussy about the welfare of her grandchildren, and it was on their account she proposed deferring the journey. She was beginning to do her utmost towards spoiling the little heir, and if she went on as she began, she would surely succeed in making him very troublesome. No matter what he wanted, she gave it to him, and sundry

Chinese curiosities, and ivory chessmen disappeared in a most mysterious way. Sir Percy missed the latter, and made inquiries, the servants, of course said they knew nothing about them. The set was spoiled by the loss of the missing pieces, and Sir Percy was considerably annoyed.

"Never mind dear!" said his mother. "I'll give you mine—but the fact is I gave the pieces to the child to play with, and he threw them into the fire."

"I hope you gave him a good slapping!" cried her son.

"What? slap him? slap the 'angel?'"

"Yes, certainly! the little wretch deserved it," said the irate parent. "That set was unique—I'd slap him well this minute, only he wouldn't know what it was for."

Sir Percy looked as if he could carry out his threat, and as other depredations had been committed, which as yet were undiscovered, the fond grandmother lifted the "angel" from the ground, and carried him off in triumph, kissing and hugging him, while the youngster yelled and struggled with all his little might, for he didn't want to go away.

"I couldn't have believed my mother could be such a fool!" exclaimed Sir Percy, looking after her.

"Grandmothers always make a fuss about the youngsters," remarked Eily, "you'll have to submit and let her spoil them!"

"By Jove! she must provide less valuable toys for them. Now I daresay I'll find something else missing," and he began to scrutinise the contents of the various cabinets.

"I don't miss anything there!" he said, and he passed on to another. Eily smiled quietly at his remark.

After a cursory glance at the second, he darted back to the first cabinet—

"Ha! ha!" he cried, "the bird!"

"What bird?" asked Eily.

"The one you gave us, it used to be here. Maud kept the key of the cabinet, but I find it in the lock, and the bird is not here."

"It is quite safe, Percy, I have it in my room."

"All right."

Eily didn't tell how the fond grand-parent had given the jewelled toy to the "angel" to look at, and how he had behaved in anything but an angelic way, and had broken

the expensive trifle. The Dowager confided the fact to Eily, and she took charge of it, and promised to send it to Paris to be repaired.

The arrival of the post-bag was an important daily event, and the *Times* was eagerly scanned for news from Zululand. Sometimes they drove into Littleleigh to get the paper as it reached there in the afternoon, for Eily was always impatient to learn the news. One morning she complained of feeling low and depressed, and said she did not sleep well.

"You ought to have remained in bed, dear," said Maud.

"I couldn't. I fancy there'll be news this morning. I feel sure there will!"

"One would think you were expecting a valentine," said Phœbe. "Perhaps you are! I expect one!"

Eily smiled, but did not speak again. She hurried through her breakfast, and was quite finished when the post arrived. Sir Percy opened the bag, there was one letter for Phœbe, it was a valentine, but not the expected one, for she threw it aside with a look of disgust. The *Times* he handed to Eily.

"There dear!" he said. "Read us some good news."

He drew an arm-chair towards the fire and Eily took possession of it, she opened the paper, threw aside the advertisement sheets and looked for the telegrams. The others were occupied with breakfast.

"Well! what news dear?" asked Phoebe, without looking round.

There was no reply.

"Oh! what is the matter?" cried Maud, starting up.

They all turned to see. Eily was deadly pale, with a look of agony in her eyes that was awful. They were all around her in a moment, but ere any one reached her she fell forward, and when Sir Percy lifted her up they were horrified at seeing a jet of blood flowing from her lips. The *Times* was stained with crimson.

They carried her up to her room; she was quite insensible, and but for a very faint heart-beat they would have thought her dead. Mrs. Detmar was in an agony of grief. What a blow it would be to her son if anything happened Eily, and it was evident she had burst a blood-vessel.

A messenger was despatched for the doctor at once; fortunately he was met on the road, and of course he hurried on to Fernleigh. He was told how Eily said she felt poorly, and what occurred a few minutes later.

When he saw her lying there, looking as if she were dead except for the faintest pulsation, he shook his head and looked very grave.

Dr. Bevan said it was a bad case, and that he should like to have a consultation with an eminent London physician; he would do his best in the meantime, but he feared there was no hope.

"Did she get a shock of any kind?" he asked.

"Not at all!" replied Maud.

After hearing the doctor's opinion, Mrs. Detmar retired to her room, where she cried bitterly. What dreadful news to be obliged to write to her son; she did not know how she could ever tell him.

Then she heard the doctor leaving the patient's room with Maud, who was listening to his directions as they went downstairs. Mrs. Detmar followed them. They went into the library, where Sir Percy and the

butler were standing together talking; they both looked scared, and ceased speaking as the others entered the room. Sir Percy held in his hand the blood-stained *Times*, and when he saw them he hastily put it behind his back.

“What do you think of her?” he enquired, with a husky voice.

“I am afraid to say anything definite; it is a very bad case!” answered the doctor.

Sir Percy made a sign to the butler to take away the *Times*. The man understood, but although he tried to do it quietly and unobserved, Mrs. Detmar saw him.

“Look there, doctor!” she said, taking it from the butler’s hand. “The poor dear was reading the paper, and just look at the state it is in.”

The doctor shuddered as he spoke.

“The dreadful tale of bloodshed that is there is”—

He stopped, warned by a sign from Sir Percy, and then Dr. Bevan remembered Harold.

“Let me take that away, please m’m,” said the butler, but Mrs. Detmar held the

paper tightly. Somehow the words just spoken by Dr. Bevan alarmed her.

"Dear aunt, give it," said Sir Percy. "I'll tell you all by-and-by!"

She still held the paper; she glanced at the spot where the crimson stream stained it. There above, in large letters heading the column, she read—

"FRIGHTFUL DISASTER IN ZULULAND.

MASSACRE OF BRITISH TROOPS."

This explained Eily's sudden illness! Sir Percy took the paper from Mrs. Detmar's trembling fingers, and led her to a seat.

"Tell me!" she cried, "tell me the truth about Harold!"

"It would be impossible to know the truth as yet; we cannot learn the real facts for some time. He may have escaped; a few did."

"Is his name mentioned?"

"Yes," replied the baronet, in a low tone.

"As dead?" queried the mother, wringing her hands.

For reply, Sir Percy turned, and buried his face on his wife's shoulder.

It was answer enough for the poor mother. She knew that, if the *Times* reported truly, that her son was lost. She was overcome with grief, but even in all her trouble she could think of Eily, and she knew what a shock the news was to her.

It nearly killed her.

What grief there was at Fernleigh that day, but alas! there were many other homes where sorrow entered with the news brought to England that morning. The heart of the kingdom thrilled at hearing of the terrible massacre of our troops at Isandlana. Strong men were bowed down with grief at the loss of a beloved son or dear brother. Maids, wives, and widows tried to hide their anguish, so as not to add to the pain of others who were sharers in their sorrow.

The Queen grieved with the mourners; the nation wept with them.

Harold Detmar's name was among the list of killed.

"The only son of his mother, and she was a widow."

When she parted from him, she felt a presentiment that she looked her last on her son. She did not think of his death as

probable, but she thought she might not live until he returned.

Her presentiment was right, for never again should she behold her beloved son.

Mrs. O'Mahon and Gerry arrived. They hastened to Fernleigh when they heard of the disaster. The London physician came also, but he and Dr. Bevan could do little for Eily. She lay there quite unconscious, breathing and pulsation at the lowest point. They both thought she could not live, and even Maud, who loved her sister so dearly, thought it would be well she should die. Life could hold no hope for her henceforth!

After several days and nights of anxiety, during which time Eily's life was in the balance, a crisis came. There was a change for the better, and Dr. Bevan said there was a hope his patient's life might be spared, but the greatest care would be requisite not to agitate her in the least, or allow her to move. A very little thing might renew the hemorrhage, and if it came on again there could only be a fatal result.

When Mrs. Detmar heard this, she decided to go home to Brighton, much as she wished to clasp Eily in her arms and mingle her

tears with the tears of the woman who was loved by her son, and who loved him. She felt it was her duty to avoid such a meeting, for it could only be attended with danger for Eily.

The widowed mother and the promised wife could not meet without agitation, so Mrs. Detmar left Fernleigh, accompanied by the Dowager, who in this time of anxiety and grief was the sole person who ever thought of the children. The baby, of course, was under his nurse's charge, but the heir was frequently carried off by his grandmother to her room, where he was allowed to rummage to his heart's content. Even her jewel case was at his mercy sometimes, and it is a wonder that some of the contents did not disappear.

When Eily was pronounced out of danger, Mrs. O'Mahon and Gerry returned to Athlone. She improved slowly, she smiled sometimes, and thanked those around for their attention, but she never said a word that could lead any one to suppose that she was aware of what had happened, and they dreaded having to tell her later. But they were mistaken; she remembered all.

One day she asked Maud if there was a letter from Africa for her.

Maud paused; she did not know what to say; there was a letter written shortly before the disaster.

Eily saw her hesitation.

"Give me my letter, please!" she said, calmly.

"But are you strong enough to read it, darling?"

"I do not intend to read it. How could I now, when I know he is dead? Give it to me, please."

Phœbe took the letter from a drawer.

"Here it is, dear."

Eily held out her thin, wasted hand, and took her lover's letter, the last penned by him. She knew it contained fond words of love and hope, and she could not read them now. She pressed the envelope to her lips, she kissed it again and again, and then, with a low moan, she handed it to Maud.

"When I die," she said, "put his letter in my coffin. Promise me!"

"I promise—but you are getting better—you will live for us, darling—we cannot spare you!" cried Maud, passionately.

Eily shook her head.

"Tell me about his mother—is she here still?"

"No! she is gone—we feared it might agitate you to see her."

"Nothing will ever agitate me again."

Eily was right. After that first day she spoke sometimes of Harold, and of his death, but she spoke of him with apparent indifference, as if he had been a stranger. She read the full account of the disaster, but not even that moved her, for not one tear did she shed over her loss. She longed to cry, but she could not; the fountain of tears was sealed. She got stronger by slow degrees, and at last she was able to be moved. Dr. Bevan was very anxious to get her to London; he wanted further advice, for he began to fear that her brain might give way. She sat for hours quite motionless, with her eyes fixed, and if any one interrupted her meditations she flew into a passion.

They brought her to London towards the end of May, and when the doctor there heard everything, and all about her symptoms, he said that tears would be the only relief to her overcharged brain.

"But I don't think anything will make her cry," said Maud.

"Let her meet Mrs. Detmar," suggested the doctor.

The mother came, but Eily met her quite unmoved, as if she were a stranger. Mrs. Detmar cried bitterly, but no tear came to Eily's relief.

The plan was a failure.

Time went on, and Maud became very alarmed; the fixed, stony stare in Eily's eyes was something dreadful, and she spoke less and less every day. The only thing that aroused her for a short time was the daily reading of the newspaper. She read it from beginning to end every morning.

One bright summer day more bad news came to England, bad news that again thrilled through every heart in the kingdom; news that brought mourning to an imperial home; news that brought bitter anguish to an imperial mourner.

The Queen wept with the bereaved mother.

The nation grieved with her! The world sympathised!

Eily read this news; she read how the
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brave young Prince fell facing the foe ; fell pierced by the assegais of the savage Zulus—and she wept !

She wept for the bright young life so cruelly cut short ; she wept for the grief brought to the imperial mother's heart, for “he was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.”

Eily wept for the death of the Prince ; wept for the sorrow of his mother—and at last she wept for her lover—and the tears saved her reason !

CHAPTER XV.

AFTER that first flood of tears Eily often wept; the stony stare left her eyes when she was able to mourn for her lover, and her health visibly improved, but still she was very delicate.

Phœbe wanted her to return home to New Garden, but she refused to go, although Gerry, who came over to London to see her, tried to persuade her to go back with him, but she was obdurate.

"I have a reason for not returning," she said. "I will not tell it; but it is quite useless your talking to me on the subject, for I am quite determined."

"How?" inquired Phœbe. "Do you mean never to return to Ireland?"

"Most probably not," was the reply.

A blank look came over the young girl's face at her step-mother's words.

"Bear with me a little while, Phœbe," said Eily, "I shall not trouble you long."

"Don't say that Eily; you know we all

want you to get strong!" cried Phœbe, and she kissed the invalid, and smoothed down the lovely soft hair which was beginning to show silver threads among the dark locks.

At last Mrs. and Miss Martin's plans were decided. They went to Llandudno for the remainder of the summer; in the autumn they would go to Bournemouth, and when the first chill winds set in, they were to journey southward to the land of sunshine and flowers. They were to go to the Riviera for the winter.

This programme pleased Eily, and she looked forward to going south. Sir Percy and Lady Langrishe would go also, and Gerry suggested that he and his mother should accompany the party.

"No, dear," said Eily, "I do not wish her to come; she only brings back recollections that I want to forget, but I should like you to be with us very much. I can send for her—when—I want her."

The summer and autumn passed, and Eily's health had not improved; her immediate removal to the South was imperative, it was the only chance of prolonging her life for a few months. One doctor suggested

Algiers, but his *confrères* thought their patient was too weak for the voyage, which might be rough at that time of year, so Menton was settled on as their destination.

The party journeyed south by slow stages, and as they reached the fair region of orange groves and tropical plants Eily's spirits revived, she was like a plant drooping for want of rain, and reviving at the first shower. The sunshine and the soft balmy air brought a faint colour to her cheeks, a bright light to her eyes.

They got settled comfortably, and then Eily, with the captiousness of an invalid, began to take a dislike to the place. She said it was *triste*, and that it irritated her to see such a constant display of family washing. There is a laundry and drying ground just beside the "Jardin Public," and when Eily made this discovery she would not go there again; but, go where she would, she could not escape *la blanchisseuse*, who is certainly ubiquitous at Menton.

Little trifles irritate invalids so easily. Still, as Eily's health appeared to improve, Maud did not like to suggest a move elsewhere.

Sir Percy and Gerry went over to Monte Carlo, and there they met first Mrs. Macaire, who was staying in Nice; and, later, they saw Miss Fowler. Both ladies said they should call on Lady Langrishe and Mrs. Martin.

Maud was alone one day when Mrs. Macaire was announced, the others were all out driving. Lady Langrishe and her visitor chatted about Menton, and the number of invalids staying there, their impressions of the place, the scenery at Monte Carlo.

"*A propos* of that," said Maud, "my husband met another acquaintance there, Miss Fowler; she is staying at the Hotel de Russie here."

"Oh, I know," answered Mrs. Macaire. "I think I ought to tell you that I should not be seen with the Fowler party if I were you."

"Why not?" with evident surprise.

"Because they are very fast—but what could be expected of girls brought up as they were?"

"Girls! there is only one."

"Yes! only one Miss Fowler; but Mrs. Evans, she"—

"Is in New Zealand!" interrupted Maud.

"Nothing of the kind; she has been returned to her mother like a bad shilling; at least, that is what report says," answered Mrs. Macaire.

"Is her husband here?" asked Maud.

"Not at all! she came back alone, said the climate didn't agree with her, as if New Zealand ever disagreed with anybody. Mrs. Evans and her mother go down to Monte Carlo every day and play for hours, while Miss Fowler prowls about the rooms trying to find some man to take her off for a walk, or over to the café. Whatever you may do, don't let Miss Martin be seen with them, for they're marked."

"I don't suppose Phœbe would care to go with them," answered Maud, "she is devoted to my poor sister, and hardly ever leaves her."

The door was opened for another visitor, Miss Fowler entered, she seemed a little embarrassed at seeing Mrs. Macaire. She apologized for her mother's not coming, and said, that she and Mrs. Evans were gone to Monte Carlo with a *party*. She laid a stress on the word *party*, as if it were something

unusual for them to go with company. Then Miss Fowler explained how her sister returned to Europe, and that it was rather a sell for her, but that Mr. Evans was coming to fetch his wife during the summer. Mrs. Macaire made a mental note of this piece of information, for she doubted its veracity.

Meanwhile the carriage party reached the cemetery, which Eily expressed a wish to visit. She was shown the spot reserved for the English; it was a dark, desolate, dank, neglected corner. The grass was growing a foot high; there was no path between the graves, there was no flower, no wreath, no token of remembrance laid on the last resting places of the few who sleep there. There was a marked contrast between this spot, and the rest of the cemetery close by. Sunshine was there, the paths were clean, the graves were flower-decked. Eily shuddered when she saw the dark corner.

"Oh! this horrible spot!" she cried, "I know it—I have seen it often, and I hate it!"

"Nay, dear! you have never been here before—this is your first visit to Menton," said Gerry.

"I tell you I know this place—I know it

well! I must have seen it in dreams, or sometimes I think I must have had another life, previous to this one. This spot has some dreadful remembrance for me. Oh, take me away! take me away!" and she burst into a hysterical fit of weeping. They tried to calm her in vain, and she became so weak, she could not stir, so, Sir Percy lifted her in his strong arms, and carried her to the carriage, and as he placed her in it she fainted. A woman standing by got them some water, and they succeeded in reviving her, but she was so weak they were alarmed, so they drove back to the hotel at once.

Maud and her two visitors were conversing together, when her husband hurriedly entered the room.

"Go to Eily at once!" he said, "she got ill while we were out, and seems very weak. Your visitors will excuse you I'm sure!"

Of course they both rose to go at once, Maud with a word or two of apology left them with Sir Percy, who told them he felt very anxious about his sister-in-law. They left in a few minutes, first Miss Fowler went, and after a little delay Mrs. Macaire followed her.

Eily was very weak, such a sudden relapse alarmed even the doctor who began to look grave, and no longer boasted of the wonders worked by the air of Menton.

One morning a few days after this last attack Eily felt better, and was lying on the sofa when Maud came in.

"What have you there dear?" she asked.

"This morning very early I saw land out there," replied Eily, pointing directly in front, "I have been looking at the maps—I suppose it was Corsica."

"Corsica is sometimes visible."

The doctor came shortly, and after replying to his questions, Eily said—

"Doctor, I want you to tell me something. I saw land out there this morning, and I have been looking at the maps—I find it must have been Corsica."

"Yes!" replied the doctor.

"We are directly opposite to it here—if I draw a line down from Menton it runs through Corsica, now a line from Cannes goes to Bona—I don't like seeing that land out there, so I wish to go to Cannes—may I?"

"My dear lady, you are too weak to go even that short distance at present, but when

you are a little stronger I see no objection to your moving, as you don't like Menton."

"I hate it!" she cried, "I want to have no land between me and Africa. I must go!"

Maud understood why Eily wanted to have no land between her and the African coast, but the doctor only wondered and thought his patient's mind was wandering, so he thought it best to soothe her by giving her permission to be moved to Cannes in a few days.

He left her and told Sir Percy he did not think his sister-in-law could live a week.

"She wants to go to Cannes," he said, "it is an absurd whim, but people often get those ideas before death!"

"But can she be moved?"

"If she persists, it is best to let her have her way, but there will be a great risk."

"No matter!" replied Sir Percy. "Her every wish must be gratified!"

He was grieved at hearing the doctor's opinion, but still he did not think Eily in such immediate danger.

CHAPTER XVI.

He had lived for his love, for his country he died,
They were all that to life had entwined him;
Nor soon shall the tears of his country be dried,
Nor long will his love stay behind him.

THE doctor was very wrong, Eily did not die within the week, but on the contrary she got better; was removed to Cannes, and from the day of her arrival there, she revived again.

Maud heard from her mother, she was staying in Dublin so that she could leave at once if she got bad news, and begged her to let her know if there was any change, and not to wait until Eily desired her to be sent for. That day Maud asked her sister if she might send for their mother.

"No! not yet!" was the reply.

The winter went by, and sweet Spring came with her wealth of flowers, the air was laden with perfume, and the invalid seemed to enjoy her drives to the lovely Esterel Mountains, or to luxuriant "Californie." She

was so much better that a ray of hope entered the breasts of her friends, but they were doomed to be disappointed. One March day she caught a chill, and soon her strength was reduced to the lowest point, and they knew the end was near.

Poor Phœbe was heart-broken, she loved Eily so much, that she could not bear to lose her. Before the invalid she tried to hide her grief, but sometimes she would give vent to her feelings; and she rushed out to the garden, and hid herself in a bower where she sobbed and cried bitterly. She heard a step coming, but she did not care who saw her, however it was Gerry who entered. He too loved Eily, and was very sad.

“No one loves her as I do!” cried Phœbe, “oh, what shall I do, when she is gone? No one in the world to care for me!”

“No, Phœbe, you must not say that. They all care for you, and I love you. Let me take care of you when our darling is gone.”

A little later that day Phœbe whispered to Eily her secret, and begged she would try, and get strong if only for a little while, so as to call her sister.

This news pleased the poor invalid, she was

so glad to know that things would come right after all, and to Maud she confided her immense gratification at the engagement.

"Mother can give Phoebe the diamonds for her wedding present," she said, "and then it will be all right."

Maud did not reply, for she thought Mrs. O'Mahon would hardly part with the ornaments during her lifetime.

Then Sir Percy had a long private interview with his sister-in-law, and promised her that all her wishes should be carried out faithfully.

Mrs. O'Mahon was summoned, and arrived in due time. She was again the blooming matron of yore, her weeds were put aside, and she was positively sparkling with jet. Maud smiled when she saw her, and thought it very unlikely that her mother would yield possession of the diamonds.

There was not much affection shown on either side at the meeting between Eily and Mrs. O'Mahon, the former was too weak to care about anything, and the latter seemed preoccupied. She was grieved to lose her daughter *sans doute*, but they had been so

estranged of late, that Eily's death could not make much difference to her.

"I forgive you all, mother!" said Eily. "Things will be all right between Gerry and Phœbe. You can give her the diamonds, and then she will have lost nothing by her father's marriage with me, I am glad to think it is so."

Mrs. O'Mahon only spoke a few words about her satisfaction at hearing of the engagement between her son and Phœbe.

A few days later the angel of death entered silently, and came for the poor stricken soul that was longing so much to go forth. Eily was not afraid, she hoped in Him, and was glad to go.

She talked that early morning of the bright kingdom she was going to, and where she felt sure that she should meet Harold.

She fell asleep for a little while, and then she awoke again, but only to take one last look at those she loved, and then with the name of Harold on her lips, with a tired sigh; her spirit returned to her Creator.

Eily was dead—the light of life was darkened for ever, and the mourners were overcome with grief.

Gerry with difficulty got Phœbe to leave the side of her beloved dead, and in consoling his love he could not think of his own sorrow. When Mrs. O'Mahon recovered a little she sought Sir Percy.

"I suppose you will make all arrangements about sending the remains home," she said to her son-in-law.

"I have already made arrangements; she is to be buried here!"

"Here!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Mahon indignantly. "I won't permit such a thing! Pray why wasn't I consulted?"

"I did not think it necessary," was the reply.

"Did you speak to Gerry?"

"No!"

"Then I consider you have taken a deal of responsibility on yourself. It is my wish that my daughter's remains are sent to Ireland."

"I am sorry that your wish cannot be carried out."

"But I say it must! It is only right that she should be buried with her husband."

"Such was not her wish!" replied Sir Percy calmly.

"Nevertheless the right thing must be done! I'll appeal to my son."

"You can do so."

She rang the bell furiously and sent a message to Gerry, who came at once.

"Gerry!" cried Mrs. O'Mahon, "Sir Percy has taken an unwarrantable liberty, and has made arrangements for your poor sister's burial without ever consulting me or you."

"I think it very kind of him," was Gerry's response.

"He proposes to leave her here. I'll not consent, and I insist that you shall interfere. It is only right that she should be buried with her husband. What will the county say if she is left here?"

"Mrs. O'Mahon, this discussion is most unseemly," said Sir Percy. "You ought to remember that your child is lying dead upstairs, and you ought to know that I should not have made arrangements without consulting you, unless I knew poor Eily's wishes."

"Oh! yes," said Gerry, "I remember—she said she told you."

"She ought to be taken back to Athlone."

If she expressed any other wish, she ought to have been told what was right," cried Mrs. O'Mahon angrily.

"She desired to be buried here—she even pointed out to me the spot," said Sir Percy. "She knew you might interfere, and I made her a solemn promise that I would see her wish carried out. The reason that she refused to tell for not going to Ireland since her illness at Fernleigh, was that she feared she might die there, and she did not wish to be buried with Mr. Martin."

"The county will be talking!" cried Mrs. O'Mahon.

"It does not matter, mother, what the county says. It must be as Eily desired."

Later Sir Percy showed Mrs. O'Mahon a memorandum written by her poor, dead daughter. She wrote that she wished to be buried at Cannes, her grave was to be facing the sea, so that when the day of resurrection comes there will only be those *riante* waves between her and the land where her lover lies in his soldier's grave.

Mrs. O'Mahon had to submit, but she did it unwillingly, however they were all against her.

They considered the wish of the dead as sacred.

She only thought of the fitness of things.

Eily was laid in her last home, in that fair spot beneath the Esterel Mountains, which is so lovely that it is hard to think of trouble and sorrow when one looks around and sees how fair He has made the land for us to dwell in.

She was left there, her grave covered with flowers that were bedewed with the tears of the mourners.

Eily's prayer was granted.

She was laid in an early grave.

They left her in her chosen spot in a foreign land, and then they turned homewards.

Phoebe was to remain with the Langrishes until her marriage, which, by Eily's wish, was not to be delayed on account of her death, so it was to take place in the autumn.

Phoebe and Gerry decided to live at New Garden, and Mrs. O'Mahon could remain at Wild Park.

"Thank you, Gerry," she replied, when he proposed this arrangement, "but Wild Park is the home of the O'Mahons; it is there you

should live, and I shall not trouble you—for I—the fact is—I am going to be married !”

“By Jove !” exclaimed Gerry in surprise, he was so completely taken aback that he could find no other words to express his astonishment.

“Yes, dear ! I am going to be married to Dr. Scott.”

The fashionable physician lost his wife about the time of Mr. Martin’s death ; the same harsh weather that killed him, struck down the good-humoured, jolly, little woman. At first the widower was inconsolable, but he met Mrs. O’Mahon brilliant with jet, and in a short time they came to a mutual understanding.

Maud was greatly surprised at this news, and felt sure her mother would never yield the diamonds to Phœbe.

She was quite right, for when she suggested that such was Eily’s wish, Mrs. O’Mahon replied that she would not part with them during her life, at her death Phœbe could get them.

Eily’s will was read in London, the ten thousand pounds settled on her, at her marriage, she left to her mother and Maud, there

were a few legacies, and the residue of her fortune she bequeathed share and share alike to Phœbe and Gerry.

Mrs. O'Mahon and her son returned to Ireland, the Langrishes and Phœbe remained in London. Sir Percy had paired for the early part of the session with an invalid member, then came a dissolution of Parliament, and he was re-elected without opposition.

When the House assembled he stuck close to his parliamentary duties, and although his party was no longer in power, he was much noticed for his concise and fluent manner of addressing the House.

CHAPTER XVII.

Che sara, sara!

DR. SCOTT was duly married to Mrs. O'Mahon.

Mrs. Grundy thought he did very well indeed, and commended him for his shrewdness.

He had four daughters, and gossips said the step-mother would be sure to get them off, and wondered if she would do as well for them as she did for her own girls.

The Misses Scott were furious at their father's marriage, and complained to all their friends, but were rather disappointed to find that everyone thought it a very good thing for them, and so it proved.

Nellie and Kate, aged sixteen and seventeen, were at once sent off to the school at Fontainebleau for a year or longer. These damsels were very wrathful at this arrangement, and expressed their opinion in very de-

cided language. But Mrs. Scott was inexorable.

The two elder girls were delighted to get rid of Misses Nellie and Kate, who were both anxious to push themselves forward, and thus interfere with the chances of their elder sisters.

Mrs. Grundy was quite right, for in a short time Miss Scott was engaged to a wealthy English squire, who chanced to visit Dublin on business, and it was further reported that Mr. Purcell was likely to be married to the second girl. His regiment left Athlone and moved to Dublin, and Mrs. Scott knowing him to be an eligible *parti* kept a close watch on him, and he was constantly invited to the house, where he found pleasant company.

The fashionable doctor's entertainments are more frequent and more brilliant than ever, and every one finds the hostess agreeable, although some dowagers say she ought to give her diamonds a rest occasionally.

If they knew all about the said ornaments how they would talk !

The demoiselles Nellie and Kate were very rejoiced to hear of their sisters' engagements,

they have become reconciled to the hateful step-mother, as they called her, and hope to leave school at the end of the year.

Phœbe and Gerry were married very quietly at Fernleigh. Colonel Carter gave the bride away. He was pleased at her choice, and was glad that his responsibility was at an end. During her stay abroad he was very anxious about her, for he was afraid some needy, foreign fortune-hunter might win her heart. So when he heard how things were he was very rejoiced.

Miss Ferrers came to the wedding, and notwithstanding her determination of never giving an O'Mahon any of her money, she gave Gerry the same sum she had given to each of his sisters, and then she told how her new will was made. All her wealth was to go to Harold Detmar, second son of Sir Percy and Lady Langrishe, and in the event of the said Harold's death before his majority the money was bequeathed to his younger brothers and sisters.

Mrs. Detmar and the Dowager often go to Fernleigh. The former is completely broken down, and looks years older than her sister,

who is still trying to spoil the "angel," and she has pretty nearly succeeded in making him a perfect nuisance. Nothing that he can lay his hands on is safe, he is an angel of destruction while his grandmother is at Fernleigh.

Maud is wise, and never interferes with her mother-in-law, and allows her to work her will with the "angel." But after each visit she has a little trouble with her son, but as he is naturally a good child there is not much danger of his being completely spoiled by his fond grand-parent.

Puck is finally installed at Fernleigh, and the nursery is his favourite quarters, where he is always welcomed with shouts of delight by the two children.

Sir Percy sometimes grumbles about his party having lost power, but Maud always consoles him by telling him *le bon temps viendra*, and in the meantime he must be patient.

It is easy for a man to be patient when he is happy, and Sir Percy and his lovely wife are as happy as their best friends can wish them to be.

Mr. Evans did turn up during the summer, and his wife found he was made of much sterner stuff than she imagined. He wanted her to return to New Zealand, but she did not wish to go. She had never been accustomed to home life, and she found it monotonous and dull. The short time the Fowlers were in Dublin was all she knew of home life. Before that time she had always lived in hotels, so it was not to be wondered at that she could not settle down quietly.

When Mr. Evans found his wife unwilling to return with him, he told her in very decided terms that he would not allow her one farthing if she remained abroad. He wished her to live with his people in Athlone, but she flatly refused to do so, and then he suggested that her mother should return to Dublin.

To this arrangement Ella objected. She would not go back there, and she said she was unfairly treated by her sister's returning to live with her mother.

Ida tried to coax her husband, but he was inflexible. Not a penny should she get from

him unless she lived in Ireland. Then she turned and coaxed her mother and bent her to her wishes. Ida would go back to New Zealand if her mother went also.

To this Ella did not object. She saw new visions of getting settled. She had failed to do so in France, and failed in Ireland, but she might succeed in a colony.

So Mr. Evans, accompanied by his wife, mother-in-law, and sister-in-law returned to New Zealand.

Gerry and his bride went south for their honeymoon trip. They went to Cannes, and there they sought Eily's grave.

The white marble tablet was engraved—

In Loving and Tender Memory

of

E I L E E N ,

AGED 24.

—
Resurgam.

Such was the simple inscription on the head-stone. She desired that her Christian name only should be put there. She did not.

wish the name of Martin inscribed, and Sir Percy carried out her wishes in every particular.

Gerry and Phœbe brought flowers—gorgeous blooms of the sunny South—and laid them on the lonely grave where their beloved one was at rest.

Dear reader, if you should visit Cannes will you think of Eily when you go to the fair spot where she is lying? Will you lay your flowers on her tomb and think of her as she was once—lovely, bright, and blooming?

If you cannot find Eileen's grave, there are others close by, others where lie fair young English flowers who were nipped by the chill winds of their native land, and who came to the sunny South in search of health. Alas! they came only to be laid in a foreign grave, far from all who loved them.

Place your flowers on one of these lonely graves, put them there on the part of a father, mother, or even lover, who cannot visit the spot where their darling lies.

Leave your flowers there in remembrance of Eily, leave them and think perhaps she

who sleeps beneath was once lovely, that
once her heart beat high with hope and joy,
and that once perhaps "she wore a wreath
of roses ! "

THE END.

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